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As a missionary who is involved in evangelism and church planting, one of my goals is to plant and establish twenty churches in twenty years. To accomplish this, it is necessary to prioritize the discipling and training of nationals in the effort to reach such a goal.

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[Is Multicultural Local Church Ministry Possible?](#)

Churches in growing ethnic communities have been forced to evaluate the manner in which they reach the ethnics of their community. This evaluation begs the question, "Is it possible to have a multicultural local church ministry?" The answer is a resounding YES. The issue is not can it happen but what form will it take.

Rev. Arturo Lucero

● [Here I Am Send Me Is. 6:8](#)

I was very fortunate to be born in a Christian home. Even my grandparents were born-again Christians. My father was a pastor's assistant in Central Baptist Church in Kiev. In 1984, when I was 15 years old, I repented and decided to dedicate my life to God. The first real trial for me was a two-year mandatory service in the Soviet Army.

Pastor Yaroslav Machinsky

● [Church Planting in the Black Community](#)

I can remember clearly the afternoon of April 29th, 1992. It was a cloudy day, not because a storm stood on the horizon, but because the soot of countless fires filled the air. It was a tragic day. The media labeled the anarchy and anger expressed by the black community as the Los Angeles Riots.

Rev. Robert Scott

● [Are We Planting or Rescuing Churches?](#)

The answer to the question, "Are we planting or rescuing churches?" is "YES - BOTH!" It is not an either/or matter. It MUST be BOTH and more! If we fail to plant new churches, we will miss the greatest opportunity of our life, and of IFCA International!

Dr. Roy E. Sprague

● [The Makeup of a Valued Youth Ministry](#)

Why is it that some churches have youth ministries that both parents and teens value? Why is it that there are churches where parents and teens alike could just as easily do without the youth ministry and all that it brings?

Pastor Troy Thornton

● [Wisconsin Regional Church Extension in the Ukraine](#)

Part of the Wisconsin Church Extension philosophy of ministry is to equip people with knowledge, skills, and passion for ministry. While WCE is located in Wisconsin, there is no boundary restriction on where to equip people. With the blessing of the WCE Board and Regional Executive Committee, by mid-June I was preparing for 2 trips to Ukraine - one in September and one in November.

Dr. Paul Thyren

● [The Importance of Planting IFCA International Churches](#)

"To be a Child again," a sentiment reflected in a Country song, strikes an occasional chord in the heart of everyone who has assumed the responsibilities of adulthood. We all envy the simplicity of a child, such as the freedom to go outside and play!

Rev. Tim Keeley

● [Church Planting in France](#)

France! The land of Calvin and the Protestant reformation! Is church planting necessary where in every town there are Catholic churches and an occasional Reformed church? Yes, because there are 35,000 towns and cities without a gospel witness.

Dr. Ivan Peterson

FEATURES...

Chaplains' Diary

● [God's Guidance in Chaplaincy Ministry](#)

by Chaplains Doug Peterson and Joseph Kraitz

Two of our Army Chaplains share how God guides in His own ways, bringing men into the Chaplaincy and guiding where they will be assigned to serve Him.

"I Will Build My Church"

Dr. Richard Gregory

Jesus Said, " I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." It is clear that it is God's business to complete the church and this He is doing. However, it is also clear from the teaching of scripture that He has privileged us to be laborers together with Him in this process. In 1 Corinthians 3:9, Paul reminds the Corinthian believers of the role leadership plays in the increase of the body of Christ. He wanted the believers to understand that neither they nor their leaders control the increase. That is God's business. Where they are included is in the synergistic process of faithfully sowing and watering the truth through faithful involvement in evangelistic and discipleship activities.

The process of working together effectively requires spiritual maturity.

Paul faced the fact that the Corinthian believers were not functioning as effective co-laborers with God in this process. He noted that they were following their preferences in leadership personality resulting in fundamental division in the body (1 Corinthians 3:4-4). The blessing of increase was absent. Diversity in the body is clearly illustrated in 1 Corinthians 12, but focusing on diversity, whether cultural, racial or otherwise, must never reign over focus on the Lordship of Jesus Christ as He superintends the variety of leadership styles, gifts, cultural orientation, or race of those He chooses to be His co-laborers. Being myopic in understanding this principle that we are co-laborers not by our choice but by His design will always evidence spiritual immaturity.

The result of spiritual immaturity among leaders and followers is evidenced in the following characteristics: (1) An Unteachable Attitude, (2) An Unresponsive Understanding, (3) An Unconsciousness of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit, and (4) An Inability to Work Together.

The process of effectively working together demands understanding of the principle of servanthood.

Paul identifies himself along with Apollos as "servant through whom you believed." He emphasized that it was of God that he and Apollos were co-laborers working in God's garden and in building God's church (vs 9). He reminds them that the Lord Jesus laid the foundation and he and Apollos built on what the Lord had initiated. He warns them that all builders and gardeners must be very careful how they build and how they cultivate the Lord's church since they will answer for its maturity and health. If the church, which he identifies as the temple of God, is defiled, God promises that he will destroy the one who is responsible for the defilement from being His co-laborer as He builds His church (vs. 16-17).

While methods are important and certain leadership styles may be preferred, our primary emphasis should be on the character, integrity and spiritual maturity of the co-laborers God is using in this great process of growing the church. This emphasis we will endeavor to provide in this issue of Voice.

What Does it Cost to Plant a church?

Rev. Les Lofquist

Upon graduation from seminary, I joined United Missionary Fellowship (now Biblical Ministries Worldwide) and we moved to Utah. On that most unusual mission field, we joined twenty-five other UMF missionaries who shared the same burden: to plant Bible Churches in Mormonland.

This was one of the most difficult tasks I've ever attempted! We arrived in Ogden, Utah and in the suburb of Roy we were met by eight people on our first Sunday. I soon experienced the truth that I later read about from the pen of Dr. Roy Sprague.

I had never before met Roy, but after being in Utah for several years, I came across one of the Northwest Independent Church Extension pamphlets he wrote entitled "What Does It Cost to Plant a Church?" The only thing I remember about this pamphlet is the profound answer to the title's question: "Everything!" It costs everything to plant a church. Those ten years in Utah taught me the difficulty of church planting and that to do it took everything I had.

It cost me all of my efforts and strength and abilities to overcome the inertia of a suburb of 25,000 people without a Bible church. It cost me all of my prayers to face the active opposition of The Enemy who did not want us to succeed. It cost me countless hours of study to prepare Bible messages that would feed God's people the Living Bread and encourage them to live a life of holiness. It cost me tears and frustration as we shared the Gospel with Mormon friends whose eyes had been blinded by the deception of their church. It cost me prestige in the world's eyes to preach to a congregation of thirty from a pulpit in a rented Day Care Center surrounded by Mickey Mouse Club wallpaper.

It cost my wife the joys of an active "church program for all ages" that we left in our Midwest churches. She missed all of my sermons for months at a time so that children in our church plant could be tended or taught. It cost my wife the comforts of a regular family income for the pressures of the irregular (and usually inadequate) income of a home missionary. Then it cost us the sacrifices of our own generous giving to help keep the church going. It cost my entire family convenience and privacy when the distinction between church building and home became blurred during the weekdays when our church had no other home than ours.

It cost my wife and me everything we had, everything we owned, every ounce of strength, every prayer we prayed so that the Roy Bible Church could be planted. **AND IT WAS WORTH IT ALL!!**

We loved church planting. It was only by the direct and supernatural thrust of the Holy Spirit that we ever left it. Because of those years, I'll always consider myself a missionary church planter. It was our GREAT honor and privilege to serve the Lord Jesus Christ by proclaiming His Word and seeing Him grow a self-supporting, Bible Church in Roy, Utah.

And the Lord Jesus was always our inspiration. It cost Him everything to redeem the church. Why should it cost any less to plant a church? He endured the sacrifice and shame, persevering through it all so that He might experience the joy of accomplishing the Father's will (Hebrews 12:2).

This was our joy. To give everything we had to plant a church, thereby accomplishing the will of the Father for our lives. What cost. What sacrifice. What joy...to plant a church.

Planting Churches among Native Americans

Rev. Duane Anderson

A Brief History

The first recorded religious efforts among Native Americans were by Spanish priests among the Pueblos along the Rio Grande River in the Southwest beginning after the Spanish conquests of the 1540s. By the year 1620 they claimed that more than 20,000 Pueblos had become Catholic. French Jesuit missionaries coming down from Canada also began church planting efforts in the early 1600s and also claimed substantial progress. Throughout the 1600s they continued to expand their influence further south and west from Canada and later north from Louisiana. Both the Spanish and the French primarily added their rituals to traditional Native religions.

Early Protestant efforts in New England resulted in the development of a number of praying villages during the 1600s including one in western Massachusetts called Stockbridge. These villages were composed of Natives who were open to Christianity. The people were separated from their tribes to try and help them learn more about Christianity without tribal influences. Most of these villages were completely destroyed in King Philip's War in 1675-1676. Stockbridge survived but was nearly destroyed by westward expansion and by the French and Indian War. Those remaining were driven westward to Western New York and later to Ohio. Finally they were driven to the area near Green Bay, Wisconsin.

The Quakers and Moravians were leaders in promoting outreach to Native Americans in the mid Atlantic states. A few missionaries from Baptist and Congregational backgrounds led in promoting outreach in the southern states during the 1600s. Later these were joined by Methodist missionaries in the 1700s. The first Bible translated into a Native language was done by Samuel Worcester and Sequoya in the Cherokee language in the early 1800s.

However, most Americans during the westward movement were not interested in evangelism among the Native Americans. Instead they saw the Native Americans as an obstacle to be removed so that they could take possession of the land. As a result, President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act on May 28, 1830 that declared that all Indians should be removed to Indian lands west of the Mississippi. This led to the "Trail of Tears" in 1838-39 where large numbers were driven west to Oklahoma and nearly 25% of those forcibly removed died on the way. A Baptist pastor, Evan Jones, chose to go with his congregation and suffered with them on that trip west. He and a few others of both Baptist and Methodist backgrounds later became circuit riding preachers in the Indian Territory. These circuit riding preachers continued well into the twentieth century as several older men have told me how these missionaries used to visit their church once a quarter or in some cases once a month.

The western movement into the areas west of the Mississippi River saw an even weaker emphasis on evangelism and a stronger emphasis on taking the land. The Mormons who had fled to Utah often sold guns to the Native Americans to help them fight this westward expansion. This has resulted in a strong Mormon influence in many of the western tribes. The primary denominations that did send any missionaries during the westward movement were the denominations that became the mainline denominations and lost their evangelistic zeal. They replaced their evangelistic zeal with a policy of accommodation similar to the Catholic and Mormon policy.

Beginning in the 1900s a few independent missions and small evangelical denominations joined the continuing efforts of the Southern Baptists to plant evangelical churches among the tribes of the western states. This movement became much stronger after World War II. Pentecostal and charismatic missions have also multiplied since World War II. In spite of the increased efforts since World War II, it is estimated that 92% of the Native Americans do not attend any church today.

Other Unique Challenges

The spread of Catholicism and Mormonism has resulted in the incorporation of some things from both of these groups into Native religions. This has also resulted in the development of a number of new Native religions such as the Native American Church. The Native American Church better known as the peyote religion teaches that peyote is the mediator to God. (Peyote is a hallucinogenic drug similar to marijuana and members of the peyote religion claim that they see visions of "god" when they use peyote.) The peyote religion now claims that more than 10% of all Native Americans are a part of their religion. In the Northwest the Shaker Church (which combines a few elements from both Catholicism and Mormonism together with beliefs from a variety of Native American tribes) has a similar influence. However, the dominant religion among many tribes is still the old religion which is animism with a strong emphasis on the fear of evil spirits.

The boarding schools have also produced some unique problems. Many children were sent to boarding school (sometimes forcibly taken from their homes) by the government. These children were often severely punished for speaking their own language even though they had not yet learned any English. These schools often included much physical and sexual abuse. (One older pastor told how when he was a boy he tried to run away from the boarding school. He was caught about two miles from the school and a rope was tied around his neck and the other end to the bumper of a Model T and he was forced to run behind the Model T back to the school fearing all the way that he might trip and fall.) Prior to 1963 most children were forced to attend either a Catholic, Mormon or Protestant religious class (unless they chose to mop the dormitory) and so Christianity is often associated with the boarding school in their minds.

Many tribes are matriarchal in all areas except the areas of religion and tribal leadership. Often the missionaries who did minister recognized this matriarchal structure and tried to work through the mother. In so doing, they took away from the men the one area of leadership that the men had in their traditional religions. This caused many men to react very strongly against Christianity. Many men still feel this rejection.

Biblical Church Planting

When I first began teaching a weekly Bible study on the Lummi Reservation in 1960, it was in an independent mission. Then in 1962 when I came to Los Angeles to attend college and seminary, I immediately began attending First American Indian Church that had been sponsored by the South Los Angeles Community Church under the leadership of its pastor, Dr. David Schmidt. I quickly saw the difference between a mission that was not focused on the development of godly leaders and a church which had already developed godly leaders and I had the privilege of learning under the ministry of those leaders from several different tribes.

A group of men from First American Indian Church formed American Indian Bible Institute in 1966 so that they could learn the Word of God in order to reach their own people for Christ. It has been my privilege to be a part of that team since the beginning. One of the first decisions we made was to study the book of Acts to find out if there was a Biblical pattern for planting churches. That study showed that all of the main churches in Acts followed the same five stage Biblical pattern which is given below using the churches of Galatia to illustrate the pattern.

I. Stage One: Initial Contacts

Goal: Evangelism - Acts 14:21a

II. Stage Two: Group Meetings

Goal: Stable Christians - Acts 14:21b

III. Stage Three: Church Beginnings & Leadership Development

Goal: Spiritual trained leadership - Acts 14:22, I Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9

IV. Stage Four: Church Organization

Goal: Independent churches - Acts 14:23

V. Stage Five: Church Extension

Goals: Sending Churches and Sister Churches - Acts 16:1-5

Biblical Church Development has proven effective in many different tribes and cultures because Biblical principles work in any culture whereas methods usually only work in a particular culture. Over the years this Biblical pattern has been used by former students on reservations and in urban areas in eleven states to plant new churches and develop existing churches. Several of the larger church planting agencies working among Native Americans such as UIM International have been implementing these principles in their church planting ministry.

Stage One - Initial Contacts - We have found that the evangelistic home Bible study is the most effective form of outreach. This makes it possible for people to get their questions answered. Evangelistic home Bible studies are held in the home of the family and we usually begin with the first twelve chapters of Genesis with the focus of "Meet Our Creator". During that time we try to assess the spiritual background of the family. If they have a fear of evil spirits orientation, we next go to the book of Mark as it shows the power of Christ over evil spirits. If they have a story orientation, we go to the book of Luke as it contains many parables of Christ. If they have some church background, we go to book of John. As the interest of the family grows, we encourage them to invite relatives (John 1:40-42), friends (John 1:45-46), co-workers (Matthew 9:9-10) and neighbors or other acquaintances (Mark 1:30-33).

Stage Two - Group Meetings - We have found that as individuals become Christians we are able to make the transition from an evangelistic Bible study to a follow-up Bible study and eventually to a growth Bible study. This way the family and the extended family are growing together in their spiritual lives and provide encouragement to one another. It is in the context of this home Bible study that people also begin to take the responsibility to read the Scripture, lead in prayer and begin to explain a few of the verses to the others. We also go with those who have become Christians to visit their extended families, friends, co-workers, neighbors and other acquaintances to share the Gospel.

Stage Three - Church Beginnings & Leadership Development - When two or three home Bible studies have seen people become Christians, it is time to begin public church services. Since people have already been reading Scripture, leading in prayer and explaining a few verses in the Bible studies, it is easy to use the church service in I Corinthians 14:23-35 as a pattern for a church service from the very first public service. (Remember, when we gather together to worship God, God is the audience and we are the participants.) It is amazing how much faster the men grow spiritually as they learn to share a few verses with the entire congregation. When a church first starts, we usually preach through a book of the Bible and have about three men speak in the service with the first taking the first verses of the chapter, the second the middle section of the chapter and the third the final section of the chapter. The final speaker is one of the leaders and it is his responsibility to tie the entire passage together.

Stage Four - Church Organization - As the group matures, needs arise which make it necessary to develop additional organization (Acts 6:1-7). During this time the men also meet together to develop a doctrinal statement for the group (this may extend over a period of several months to a year or more). However, this also provides an ideal opportunity to help the men get to know from Scripture what they believe and why they believe what they believe. The men are also shown how to explain the doctrinal statement to their families. Incorporation and the writing of by-laws also happen during this period.

Stage Five - Church Extension - Through the years, the Native American churches in the Los Angeles area have seen leaders go out from their churches to plant or develop churches on reservations and in urban areas in eleven different states. In fact most of the men who have developed as leaders have eventually gone out to serve the Lord in other areas. The focus has been to **reach, teach, train and send**.

The churches have been able to measure their effectiveness not by how many people they bring in but by how many they send out to serve the Lord in other areas.

Duane Anderson has served under Native American leadership the past 40 years, the last 34 as president of American Indian Bible Institute whose board is composed of men from eight different tribes. Duane also serves on the boards of Bible Church Mission and UIM International. For much more material by Duane on Biblical Church Development, see the Bible Institute web site: <http://www.aibi.org>

The Rural Challenge

Rev. John Edgell

Picture a rural resort community, an empty church building on a country road, and an energetic church planter. The church planter rented the building and began the process of planting a church. He put his energies into the church several years, but then moved on to another work. I was asked to oversee the work until a new missionary pastor could be found.

Frankly, I was not ready for what I encountered. Because there were no jobs available in the area, the church planter had lived and worked elsewhere. This resulted in limited opportunity to build bridges to the community. Further, although the church planter had a doctrinal statement, the new community church had not adopted it as their own. So when I sat down with the steering committee I found that we were all in very different theological camps. About the only thing we agreed on was that you had to believe in Christ for salvation. To complicate things even more, the group had no clear sense of affiliation. Thus, several of the steering committee members questioned what right I had to lead their steering committee, and give direction to their church.

For several months I tried to lay a solid foundation under a structure built on sand, but the other steering committee members did not want a foundation. They met in private and voted our church extension agency and me out of the picture. No one was going to tell them how to run their church! Sadly, the church soon collapsed.

Laying the Right Kind of Foundation

It is to be hoped that we learn from our mistakes. From the above mistake I learned several things about laying the right kind of foundation when planting churches, and apply them here to the rural community.

One, it is important to begin with a clear doctrinal statement. This is true with any church plant, but especially so in rural areas where people tend to have a community church mindset. People from the community come to the new church thinking that their religious beliefs will be accommodated. The lack of a clear doctrinal statement will soon lead to confusion, division and/or accommodation. When planting a new church our point of emphasis is important. We are proclaiming God's truth, not accommodating a diverse community of believers. Every town needs a Bible church, not a community church.

Two, it is important to begin with a clear statement of affiliation. Right from the start people need to know that the new church is being planted by a particular IFCA International church planting agency, or IFCA International church. There should be no question as to the right of the agency to be involved in and give oversight to the church plant. In rural communities there is often a very independent mind set, and if association with IFCA International is not established up front, the people will often resist becoming affiliated at a later date.

Three, it is important to begin with a viable financial plan. In many rural communities where a church might be needed the finances are not there to support a full-time pastor. Finances will need to be raised to begin the work, and finances will need to be raised to sustain the work. We cannot expect the rural church to become self-supporting in three to four years. Some rural works will never attain self-supporting status, and will need to pursue one of several options with their IFCA International church extension agency. They could continue with a missionary pastor who receives support from a church, or a pool of churches and friends. On the other hand, they might call a missionary lay pastor, or perhaps a circuit-riding pastor (a man who pastors more than one church).

Fourth, it is important to begin with a commitment to the community. While we are not establishing community churches, we are establishing churches with a heart for the community. Every rural

community has its own personality. We must be committed to learning and understanding the community in which we would plant a church. Involvement in community activities is essential to building bridges to the people you desire to reach. To be effective in the rural setting you will need to be a chaplain to the community at large, as well as pastor to your flock. Winning the hearts of the people requires longevity and lots of patience.

Key to a Successful Church Plant

One can no longer say, "This is the way to plant a church in the rural community." Rural culture is fluid. Years ago America shifted from a rural agricultural to urban industrial society. Now it has shifted from urban industrial to suburban service-oriented. Today a rural community might be an extension of the urban or suburban community. Some people like living rural, but commuting urban. A rural community might be a mix of those with an agriculture mindset and a retired suburban mindset.

There are communities that have strong religious or ethnic roots, Lutheran, Catholic, Swedish, Norwegian, or perhaps Hispanic. Other rural communities are made up primarily of people who have escaped to the country! In other words, today our rural communities are diverse. That is why I emphasize that the church planter must learn and understand the community targeted for a church plant.

Key to successfully planting a church is asking the right questions:

1. Where do the people of this community work?
2. What kind of work do the people of this community do?
3. In what ways are the people of this community diverse from one another?
4. What do the people of this community have in common with each other?
5. What is the religious or ethnic background of the people in this community?
6. Are the people of this community gregarious or anti-social?
7. What kind of activities draw the people of this community together?
8. What significant, identifiable social problems do the people of this community face? (Drug addiction, alcoholism, unemployment, high divorce rate, etc.)
9. How would a person best make contact with the people of this community? (Visit homes, visit at work, community functions, mail, local café, etc.)

When those questions are answered the church planter can begin to put a plan together. Each church planting plan will be unique to the community in which the church is being planted.

Answering Some Important Questions

We have looked at some foundation blocks, but there are still a couple nagging questions that need to be answered. Is there really a need for church planting in rural America? Do not most rural communities already have a church? If not, why can't the people drive to a nearby city?

One, there is a need. Although many rural communities already have a church, often that church has its roots in a mainline denomination that is no longer fundamental. Some of these churches have closed. Some have become community churches with unacceptable doctrinal diversity, while others are still mainline, and proclaim error.

Two, most rural communities across our land are not close enough to a city to drive in to town to go to church. Further, even if these communities were close enough to a city that the people could drive to church who would be reaching the unchurched people in these communities? When a person leads their neighbor to Christ, that neighbor will probably have little motivation to drive to the city to go to church with people he does not know and with whom he has little in common.

A couple years ago our church extension agency was contacted by four Christian couples who live in a rural town in eastern Oregon. "Can you send someone to plant a church here?" "Why?" "Because the

nearest Bible preaching church is 80 miles away, and in another state!" Driving to the city was not an option for those folks.

Three, as stated earlier, every community needs a Bible church, not just a church. People need the truth, not just religion.

There are people out of sight, living on old farms, or living in new homes built back in the woods or up on hillsides, or living behind closed doors in small towns, who need to hear the good news of salvation by grace through faith. These rural communities need a faith mission, a missionary pastor to come in and plant a church. Rural America is a mission field.

Rev. John Edgell is the assistant director of the Northwest Independent Church Extension and a member of IFCA International.

Training Nationals to Plant Churches in Their Own Country

Mr. Andy Girwarnauth

For the last two decades, the church has been confronted with the reality of a trend that has proven itself to be very effective. For some, the thought of training and supporting nationals is embraced with fervor, while for others, it is regarded with fear. As a missionary who is involved in evangelism and church planting, one of my goals is to plant and establish twenty churches in twenty years. To accomplish this, it is necessary to prioritize the discipling and training of nationals in the effort to reach such a goal.

I would like to suggest several reasons, which necessitate the training of nationals in church planting:

First, let us look at Christ's Model. As we peruse the pages of Scripture, we see that Christ is the pattern to follow in the pursuit and practice of holiness. He also demonstrates for us a high level of discipleship making, whereby He chose and trained twelve dynamic men.

Christ chose His countrymen (nationals) to turn the world upside down. Acts 17:6 says, "...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;" I am fully convinced that our churches today need to go back to the basics of biblical truth and seek to understand the foundation of Jesus' model, hence the training and utilization of nationals to the highest level of ministry.

This brings us to the second reason for the training of nationals to plant churches in their own country. This reason can be clearly understood through:

Christ's Method - In my endeavor to plant churches I have discovered that it is much easier when it is done in a team effort. Many one-man shows have come and gone. The method implied through Christ's ministry was certainly not a Lone Ranger method; but rather, one of team exertion.

After a full scale theological training under the Master-teacher, the disciples were ready to be sent out. Jesus did not require of them to go individually, but rather, sent them out in teams of two (Matthew 21:1 & Mark 6:6-13). Jesus clearly recognizes the importance of teamwork in the ministry. The best results I have seen in church planting ministry have come from applying this method. The success and results are far greater when that connection is made, ie, linking up a trained national with a missionary. As a team working together, both parties will be able to learn from each other. This creates incomparable strengths for that particular ministry. The team method, which our Lord Himself so vividly portrays, has proven itself for those of us in ministry, especially serving in the area of evangelism and church planting.

Many times over I have seen where the missionary has all the knowledge, but the national has the wisdom. The missionary has the currency, but the national has the culture. The missionary comes with a desire and call, but the national has a heart to reach his people. Therefore, the team concept of coupling a trained national to work alongside a missionary has certainly shown itself to be successful in my own country of Guyana, South America.

How does this work? Just as Jesus saw potential in his disciples, it is important to choose men of proven character and calling. They must have completed an intense discipleship program, have demonstrated faithfulness, integrity, and above all a passion for souls. Our own pastoral training program requires two and a half years of accredited theological studies, utilizing visiting professors and qualified missionaries as instructors. It is very effective to keep the men in their own country rather than training them overseas. Previous experience has taught that many do not return. A sponsorship program has been utilized to facilitate their physical needs and free the men for ministry and full-time studies. Once out of the program, the financial support is continued until the local church is capable of supporting their pastor (up to five years). In addition to their classroom studies, it is required that they are involved in their local church, gaining valuable experience alongside their pastor. Following graduation, the prospective national pastor enters a one-year internship where he is assigned partial or full responsibility

of a church. He is mentored by another national pastor or missionary in an ongoing accountability relationship. This is the best way to eventually work a missionary out of a job and into a new church plant.

There is a third element for training nationals for church planting. As we have already seen, the choosing and the training are vitally necessary. Equally true is the coming alongside by a missionary to team up with a national. Another essential ingredient for the training of nationals to plant churches is:

Christ's Managers - By "manager" I mean one who will be held responsible and accountable for the caring of the flock. It has long been said that the intent of the missionary should be one of working himself out of a job. The Scriptures have clearly displayed that truth in the life and ministry of our Lord when He commissioned His disciples to henceforth "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel...." In a very real sense, the Lord has worked Himself out of a job and so designated the ongoing responsibility to the disciples to carry the single, most greatest message to the ends of the earth.

The utilization of the nationals who are trained should be the ultimate goal of the missionary as he models his ministry after our Lord's ministry. The tendency is to sometimes stay in one place too long. Our Lord's work on earth was finished after some three and a half years and He handed it over to the disciples. That must be equally true in church planting. The missionary who is working alongside trained nationals must have a clear vision, purpose, and mission for his accomplishment. And when this has been fulfilled, it should be handed over to the national, 'Christ's Manager,' with full responsibility to carry out the work.

As a pastor and a church planter, these thoughts have been applied to our own ministry. If a missionary overstays and spends his life in a maintenance ministry, then it becomes clear that there is a poor concept of stewardship. The church today must place a heavy emphasis in their missionary endeavor on the training of nationals in their commission of evangelism and church planting. The national advantage is great, as they are able to work within their own culture to bridge the gap in a ministry of reconciliation. As I am now in my third term of a church planting ministry, I have personally seen the effectiveness of following these basic principles, and will continue to make room for the next trained national.

Andy Girwarnauth is a missionary with UFM International as a Guyanese national in church planting since 1988. He is a graduate of Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music, and Solid Rock Theological Seminary (Th.M.) He currently serves as director of the Association of Bible Churches in Guyana, President of the Berbice Bible Institute, and pastor of the Crabwood Creek Bible Church. He and his wife Kathleen have three children.

Is Multicultural Local Church Ministry Possible?

Rev. Arturo Lucero

President & Founder of Multi Cultural Ministry

Churches in growing ethnic communities have been forced to evaluate the manner in which they reach the ethnics of their community. This evaluation begs the question, "Is it possible to have a multicultural local church ministry?" The answer is a resounding YES. The issue is not can it happen but what form will it take.

Space does not permit discussing at any length models with accompanying pros and cons for multicultural local church ministry. Churches will select one model over another because it best satisfies their ministry objectives, resources, and personal preferences. The following examples are successful models that have been implemented by three churches in Southern California.

Cluster Congregations.

First Baptist Church of Westminster developed the cluster congregation concept. It grew out of a need that was not met by their traditional denominational mission strategies or local church immigrant department approaches to multi-ethnic local church ministry.

The issue of facility use gave rise to the cluster concept. Old established congregations were not maximizing the use of their facilities and they were struggling financially with its maintenance. New immigrant congregations on the other hand struggled with finding affordable permanent facilities.

The solution for First Baptist was the formation of the Goldenwest Worship Center. This is a non-profit corporation that leases the facilities of First Baptist to independent ethnic congregations. Under this arrangement each church maintains its autonomy and protects the integrity and ministry of each congregation. Each member congregation pays a monthly rental fee. The center provides office space, worship and education space, utilities, insurance, and advertising. The pastor of each congregation serves on the Board of Directors for the Goldenwest Worship Center. According to the administrator of the Goldenwest Worship Center, four ethnic groups are utilizing the center and they are open to admit as many other groups as scheduling of facility use will allow.

Ethnic Departments

Faith Bible Church of Northridge first started an ethnic department in 1992. This model grew out of a need for a local church to actively and personally reach the ethnics of her community. The ethnic department is an expanded ministry of a local church. It's more than just a Sunday school class. It offers all of the ministries of an independent church, but it is one with the founding church. The immigrant pastor is a staff member of the founding church. The immigrant attendees are members of the founding church with all the privileges of membership. All offerings go into the general fund and are distributed according to the budget.

Faith Bible Church in Northridge attempted its first ethnic ministry in 1992 in cooperation with Bible Church Mission (BCM) of Southern California. I had been working with the pastor and had introduced him to a prospective Hispanic pastor who had applied with BCM as a church planter and IFCA International for membership.

Due to significant doctrinal differences, the brother was denied IFCA International and BCM membership. I notified the pastor of these developments and encouraged him to be patient as we looked for another church planter. He, however, had developed a good relationship with the Hispanic pastor and wanted to work with him in spite of the doctrinal differences. Subsequently BCM backed away from assisting Faith Bible Church. I warned the pastor of the potential conflicts that can arise due to doctrinal differences and a failure to put some basic ministry agreements down in writing.

On November 12, 1997, the new pastor of Faith Bible Church, Rev. Doug Sachtleben, found himself sitting across a table from the Hispanic Pastor in a County courtroom as the defendant in a civil action against Faith Bible Church. It was at this point that I was asked to provide counsel.

We reviewed the vision of the church for starting an ethnic department. We met with the remaining Hispanic families to confirm their desire to become a Spanish-speaking department of Faith Bible Church. Then we developed a covenant agreement. It contained the following: a job description for the Spanish pastor, chain of command, facility use guidelines, financial commitments of the founding church to the immigrant pastor, and the financial expectations of the founding church for the Spanish department.

It's been two years since Faith Bible Church regrouped. Pastor Sachtleben writes, "Oscar Chavez came to us from the Spanish-speaking ministry at Grace Community Church of Panorama City, California. For the past two years, he and I and the rest of the Board of Elders have worked and walked together in genuine unity. Sure, there have still been cultural and ministry misunderstandings. But the commitment of both congregations has been to work together in submission to the Word of God. Over the last couple of years we have had fellowship, communion and baptismal services together."

Just recently, Faith Bible Church has utilized another model, that of hosting an independent immigrant church. Two other congregations have begun to use FBC's facilities, a Korean Church plant and a Turkish-speaking Armenian group.

Multi-ethnic Worship Service

Emmanuel Church of Paramount, California continues to expand its outreach to the English-speaking people of its community. The church started as a Dutch-speaking (dairymen) Reformed church in 1920. In 1945 the Church decided to shift the morning services from Dutch to English to accommodate their children and grandchildren.

By 1960 the Church reached its highest attendance of 425 Dutch-Americans. That same decade urban sprawl reached the City of Paramount. Dutch-dairyman-flight ensued and the attendance dropped to 200. Pastor Harold Korver was called in 1970. He initiated the shift from ministering to only Dutch-Americans to reaching all English-speaking people in the community. By 1988 attendance had grown from 200 to 1,000. The congregation consisted of 25% Dutch-American, 70% other white Americans, and 4-5% Blacks and Hispanics.

As the demographics of the church changed, so did those of the community. By 1988 only 10% of the students attending the local high school were white. For almost a decade the church undertook community service projects to reach out to the community, but few of those ministered to visited the church. Those who visited didn't stay. The cultural and socio-economic differences were too wide to bridge.

In 1993 the church purposed to reach its English-speaking multi-ethnic community. From 1994 to 1996 it worked to prepare its people. They were discipled and equipped to lead cell groups in preparation for launching a multi-ethnic English-speaking worship service. In September of 1996: 20 non-anglos and 20 anglos started six cell groups to assimilate the expected newcomers and a multi-ethnic worship team was organized consisting of Hispanic, Black, Asian and Anglo members. Then in January of 1997 the church used the Phones for You to canvas their community. English-speaking ethnics were the target group. 25,000 people were called and invited to participate in an English-speaking multicultural worship service. 320 people attended the first service. This service now averages around 235. Attendees are 40% white, 50% Hispanic, and 10% Black. All are from a lower socio-economic and educational level than the two other predominately anglo worship services.

While models may vary, there are two key ingredients for a fruitful multicultural local church ministry: (1) a spirit of unity, and (2) a covenant agreement.

Unity is the oneness of mind for a multicultural local church ministry. It must permeate the pastoral staff, leadership and congregation. This requires great patience on behalf of the Pastor with his leadership and congregation. Failure to create unity will result in factions that eventually lead to strife among the English-speaking church members and between the English-speaking and immigrant church. MCM averages eight months in the creation of this oneness of mind with a local church before moving on to the second key ingredient, the development of a covenant agreement.

The purpose of the covenant agreement is to deal with the issues that must be agreed to before a local church begins an ethnic ministry. My research of multicultural congregations reveals that there are seven issues that can cause dissension between the ethnic groups. Issues that if left unresolved will lead to unfulfilled expectations and an eventual clash between the host church and the ethnic ministry.

Multicultural local church ministry is indeed feasible. True, there are many pitfalls that a novice can fall into. Therefore I recommend to anyone considering reaching the ethnics of their community to seek the counsel and guidance of an experienced multicultural local church pastor in their area or a para-church agency like Multi-Cultural Ministry to assist you. Recommended reading is Jerry Appleby's, [The Church Is In A Stew](#), Beacon Hill Press. For more information about Multi Cultural Ministry go to our web site at MCMweb.org. or call us at (760) 244-2805 exct.29.

Rev. Art Lucero is currently the interim pastor of Hesperia Community Church, Hesperia, California. He is the President and Founder of Multi-Cultural Ministry, which is dedicated to assisting the local church transition from a monocultural to a multicultural, multilingual ministry. He resides in Victorville, CA with his wife Debbie and their five children.

"Here I am, send me!" Isaiah 6:8

Yaroslav Machinsky

It is possible that you heard testimonies in the past of the Lord establishing new churches. Each testimony brings us joy as we witness God bringing forth yet another church and awakening new souls.

I was very fortunate to be born in a Christian home. Even my grandparents were born-again Christians. My father was a pastor's assistant in Central Baptist Church in Kiev. In 1984, when I was 15 years old, I repented and decided to dedicate my life to God. The first real trial for me was a two-year mandatory service in the Soviet Army. During that time, the communist regime was making the situation for believers very difficult, including the army. It was difficult for me to understand why the Lord would allow me to serve in the cold Siberian land, where I was surrounded with spiritual and moral emptiness. But this was a time when the Lord was preparing me for His service. During those years, I witnessed a lot of spiritual needs and towards the end of my service in the army, I decided to become a missionary and stay in Siberia. Unfortunately, during the time in the army I ruined my health and therefore had to go back home, to the Ukraine.

The Ukraine is located in the center of Europe, with a total population of 50 million people. It is somewhat a Christian country. A little bit over one thousand years ago, at the request of Duke Vladimir, our forefathers were baptized by the Russian Orthodox priests and were pronounced Christians. But this was a dead Christianity. And only 150 years ago, the Lord began awakening our people to the living faith through the Word of God. In the early 90s, the total number of believers in Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine and the place where I serve the Lord today, was a little bit less than four thousand. These were divided among five evangelical Baptist churches. That is a small number considering that the population was three million.

The Lord heard the prayers of our brothers and sisters and sent spiritual awakening to our people. I am thankful to the Lord that during this time, He called me to be a missionary to organize a new church in Kiev. Revival Baptist Church, where I serve the Lord as a pastor, grew out of a small Bible study for new believers. In 1991, the Lord called me to lead this class for new believers and seekers, which was organized after the street evangelism outreaches. Thirty people attended this class. I was constantly asking the Lord to give me wisdom on how to do this work. Working with new believers through Bible studies was new. No one from the existing Baptist churches had any experience in this. We did not have any curriculum to go by and there were not enough Bibles. The Lord provided for these needs through many brothers and sisters from other countries. We received much help from missionaries who came to work in the Ukraine. From 1992, the biggest help and support for me was the White family from Pastor John McArthur's Grace Community Church. This family was living with us. They have become an example of life with God and the study of God's Word. The Lord sent us the necessary study materials, such as "The Basics of Faith," produced by the Grace Community Church.

When I began teaching the Bible study, I was doing it full-time, so there was no time left for other work. The Lord saw my need and soon touched the hearts of brothers and sisters from America to provide me with regular financial support. In the beginning my financial support was provided by the family of Dr. Richard I. Gregory. Today, my financial and spiritual supporter is Byron Center Bible Church led by his son Pastor Richard W. Gregory. Regular missionary conferences and seminars provide me with great encouragement and support, which I need in my work and give answers to many spiritual questions.

In 1991, the Lord gave me a wonderful helper in my life - my dear wife Nadezhda. Today, we are praising God for our three daughters: Tatiana, Inna and Elena. We are so glad to see that they love the Lord since their early days. We are also thankful that they have children's Bibles, that they happily attend Sunday school and the club for children in our church called "Awana."

A few months after we began our Bible study, we started having Sunday services and with that in progress, a new problem arose. We were pondering on how to bring the Good News and teach the church. That is when Aleksei Brinsa - an experienced and God-fearing Pastor and his Irpenskaya Bible Seminary came to my aide. I am very glad that I graduated from this seminary. Many teachers from fundamental churches gave me the tools on how to study the Bible and pass it on to others.

In the summer of 1992, ten brothers and sisters were baptized as a testimony of their birth from the Bible study of our new church. Today over 100 people attend our services and all the members of our church are new believers. Because the reason for our church's existence was evangelism, today we continue evangelism outreaches on the streets and playgrounds and hold evangelistic rallies during Christmas and Easter. New converts and seekers are invited to our new Bible study groups.

Newfound religious freedom brought out not only the opportunity to preach the Gospel but also the appearance of many false teachings. So the question today is, "How do we stay in the Truth?" It is important to know what the truth is. In the church, brothers in the Lord and I preach verse after verse and lead Bible studies, where we study one book of the Bible at a time. We found that Bible based books of true teachers of the Bible, commentaries of different books, such as 1 Corinthians, Ephesians and Romans written by John McArthur and published by Slavic Gospel Association are our great aide.

In 1999, our church began its services in our own building, though not all the construction work there is finished. Having our own building allowed many opportunities for our church to arise. From the day when our church was established, the services were held in rented facilities. The lack of space for services, classes and Sunday school was preventing our church from growing. Morning services would be held in one place, and evening services in another. High rental costs and other religious groups, such as Hari Krishnas, who had their meetings in the same building with us, caused tremendous trials for our church.

Today, we are thankful to the Lord for allowing us to have our own place with the help of many brothers and sisters. We are asking God to help us complete the construction of the church building this year. Our desire is to dedicate this building in October 2000. At this point we have to complete a lot of renovations: render and paint the walls, finish ceilings and floors. We also need to buy furniture. But even today, the services in our church building have opened many opportunities for the life of our church. We are happy to have five Sunday school classes and are praying for the facilities to open, to accommodate four more classes. Brothers and sisters can now have Bible studies every Wednesday. On Sundays, brothers spend time studying how to bring the Gospel in a more efficient way. Last Christmas, our church held nine evangelism services for 2500 children and youth from the neighborhood with a population of 300,000. We are glad to see newcomers every Sunday. Eight more people came to know the Lord. Our need and prayer today is preparation of new leaders.

May the words said by Jesus Christ about Him building His church in the book of Matthew 16:18 come true at Revival Baptist Church. Let us pray for one another, and eagerly work for the Lord as we await His soon coming.

Pastor Yaroslav Machinsky is the Pastor of Revival Baptist Church and has been one of the 100 IFCA International Operation Partnership church planters. He recently graduated from Irpenskaya Seminary and is overseeing the construction of their church building in suburban Kiev, Ukraine.

CHURCH PLANTING IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Rev. Robert Scott

I can remember clearly the afternoon of April 29th, 1992. It was a cloudy day, not because a storm stood on the horizon, but because the soot of countless fires filled the air. It was a tragic day. The media labeled the anarchy and anger expressed by the black community as the Los Angeles Riots. With tears in my eyes, I drove through the mayhem. I watched people ransacking businesses in an almost carnival atmosphere. I saw people forming assembly lines to move furniture out of stores onto the roofs of cars as if they were baggers in a supermarket. I also witnessed a police officer pull his rifle on a young teenage boy as he ran to get away. I held my breath in shock and sighed with relief when the officer finally yielded by lowering his weapon. It was a numbing experience that I will never forget.

Perhaps more painful to me than the events I watched that day were the responses from the church leaders in the days following. I prayed as earnestly as I knew how that God would raise up the voice of a Christian leader who could, with passion and theological insight, address the tragedy that I had witnessed. I regret to say that I still haven't heard that voice. In the black community, the media flocked to pastors steeped in liberation theology who consistently shifted all blame from the inner city participants of the bedlam. From the conservative fundamental evangelical community, I heard eloquent and theologically precise sermons that explained how the anarchy was the hamartiological outworking of total depravity. Yet any reference to racial discrimination was consistently omitted.

It was hard for me to imagine how fundamental Christians could watch and preach about the spiritual turmoil that came out of the LA riots but do virtually nothing to reach out to that community. I am not aware of any conservative fundamental church that even added urban ministry to its missions budget in order to address the sin they preached against. In the end, I was led to the conclusion that there existed a tremendous void of Bible churches ministering to the black community that could speak for and from that community.

One year after the riots, upon graduation from seminary, I accepted the pastorate of an IFCA International church that happened to be only two major city blocks due north of the epicenter of the Los Angeles riots. It was a church planted by Pastor Lee Morgan with the assistance of the IFCA thirty years ago. As far as I know, it was one of only two IFCA International churches in our nation located in a black community. Seven years and a church merger later, I thank God that our church is a growing, well staffed Bible Church that is improving in its effectiveness at reaching our now bilingual urban community.

It is from this perspective that I address the issue of church planting in the black community. I do not intend to present myself as an expert church planter or as an authority on how churches can be planted in every black community. I am convinced, however, that the same biblical principles Paul used to plant churches 2,000 years ago will work today in the black communities of our nation and everywhere else. Here, then, are a few suggestions that I believe could help IFCA International to plant churches in this endeavor.

1. Don't underestimate the power of the gospel.

The human conveyor of the gospel is insignificant in relation to the outcome of the work of the gospel. The issue is not so much who shares the gospel as much as what we share and the fact that we do share our faith. This Fall seven white students from the Master's College spent their college mission's week helping our church evangelize in our community. During an outreach at a nearby park two of the students went to the homes of gang members. The gang members in disbelief (because they were white), asked them why they came to Watts, assuming that it was a required school assignment. They answered that it was not a requirement by the school but that they came voluntarily to share with them the love of Jesus Christ. I, along with other church members, had canvassed that block on three previous occasions

with no results. On this day, as the two Master's students returned to the park, about seven or eight gang members came following them. They stayed and played basketball with us and listened as we shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

There is a fine line between having faith and being foolish, and yet there is a profound difference between walking by faith and standing in fear. In order to plant a church in the black community we must find people who are willing to walk by faith in order to share the gospel in that community. The second point follows closely after the first.

2. Target the Black Community

In order to plant churches in the black community, churches need to target this community. In John 4, Jesus purposed to stop in Samaria. Why? So that He could present Himself as their Messiah and to show the disciples that there were cross-cultural harvest fields all around them that could be overlooked because of cultural indifference and ignorance. The text illustrates this point by showing how the theologically well-trained disciples went into the city and came out only with food, and an untrained Samaritan woman touched by Jesus with the wonder of the gospel went into the same city and brought nearly the whole town to Jesus Christ. Every church should plan and budget and strategize to reach its Samarias. This can be done by training and sending church planters or finding and supporting church planters willing to work in the those communities.

3. Be Culturally Flexible If Necessary

The words "cultural sensitivity" can conjure up all sorts of errant notions in our biblically antagonistic, relativistic society. But in the work of missions, the Bible in unmistakable terms incorporates cultural flexibility as a requirement in the work of church planting. In I Cor. 9, Paul reveals that this was one of the major factors that contributed to his success as a church planter. He wanted to win more, and he did so by becoming all things to all men *culturally* when he could do so while staying under the law of Christ.

Therefore, in order to become an effective church planter in the black community one must learn to adapt culturally, if necessary, to fit into that community. I should add that the black community is far from being homogeneous, so the church planter must analyze the specific black community he aims to reach. Furthermore, there are churches throughout the black community in which the Bible is being taught and people are being saved and are growing in Christ but which are noticeably different from the typical fundamental Bible church. These churches could prove to be fruitful partners in aiding IFCA International to plant churches in the black community if cultural adjustments could be addressed biblically. Finally, there exists a strong sense of alienation in the black community from fundamentalists because of the perceived lack of genuine effort to reach out to this community. The opposite of biblical love is not always hate, but is often indifference. This issue must be squarely addressed by fundamentalists desiring to plant churches in black communities.

With perhaps only two black churches in IFCA International, we have a long road ahead of us to make a significant impact in the black community. I am not convinced that it is an impossible endeavor for IFCA International to plant churches in the black community. In fact, Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Liberals have managed to plant churches everywhere within the black community. I do think, however, that it will be a great challenge, and a challenge that will require significantly more attention than it has yet been given. But I am reminded that church history is full of men who stepped out in faith, like Paul, and were used by God to turn the tide. God *is able* if we will be faithful to our calling to labor to plant churches in our Jerusalems, Samarias, Judeas and to the remotest parts of the earth.

Bobby Scott is senior pastor of Los Angeles Community Bible Church located on the campus of the Los Angeles Training School where he is also an instructor. He earned a B.S. in kinesiology at UCLA and his M.Div. from The Master's Seminary. He is currently working towards his Th.M. in Old Testament theology at The Master's Seminary.

"Are We Planting Or Rescuing Churches?"

by Dr. Roy E. Sprague

"Let's see -- here's one; that's two; oh, and that's three, four, five." I've just been sitting here looking through our IFCA International Directory. I've been counting the churches in our Regional that are a part of our fellowship, and that have become members of IFCA International as a result of the ministry of our Church Extension agency. It's very encouraging! Indeed, God has blessed. But I know that it's the result of much prayer, extensive planning, involvement of many people, and lots of hard work.

The answer to the question, "Are we planting or rescuing churches?" is "YES - BOTH!" It is not an either/or matter. It MUST be BOTH and more! If we fail to plant new churches, we will miss the greatest opportunity of our life, and of IFCA International! If we do not rescue churches which are sick and troubled, we are neglecting a most important scriptural mandate. We must also continue to encourage and serve the established churches. We need one another!

While sitting here counting the churches listed in the Directory, I'm also looking out the kitchen window at our rose garden. In this garden are some wonderful, established rose bushes which "anchor" the garden -- *Queen Elizabeth*, *Double Delight* and *Chicago Peace*. We have some new roses, just planted last year, which are healthy and growing and bloomed so prolifically -- *Graham Thomas*, *Brass Band* and *Love*. And yes, we do have some "sick" roses -- *Joy* and *Brandy*; and our *New Day* has definitely seen better days. But we're working with every rose in the garden. We're planning and pruning and "doing all the right things" to achieve the maximum results. Beautiful roses do require proper care, but oh my, are they ever worth it all! Flourishing churches also require proper care, and praise God the results are not only worth the effort now, but throughout all eternity!

In our "IFCA International Church Garden" there are wonderful, established churches which "anchor" each Regional. These churches are preaching the Word, ministering effectively, growing consistently, and impacting their communities for God's glory. They are models of biblical ministry for all the churches of the Regional.

How equally exciting it is to be involved in planting new churches. To see the growth and development of the new church plants -- new communities, new believers, new buildings, new challenges -- it's a constant cause of praise to God! And these churches, which are evidence of new life, encourage the people in the established churches to pray more, to give more, to be involved more. The result is a bonding of hands and hearts for the fellowship of IFCA International.

Yes, there are also some "sick" churches in our Regional. We pray, and urge many others to pray. We counsel, and encourage, and weep and work to rescue them. I just noticed a church listed in our Directory as an IFCA International member which was ready to close 10 years ago. I can't hold back the tears of joy as I reflect on their report for this past year. They averaged 115 in Sunday Worship attendance. There were 12 people who trusted the Savior, 8 new believers baptized, and 16 people received into Church membership.

There's a young couple from the membership who are preparing for missionary service with *New Tribes Mission*. The church is now assisting a nearby country church in a ministry of outreach. God willing, they will be hosting the IFCA International Regional Conference this Fall. Has it been worth it? YES, it has -- many times over!

If we are to continue to effectively minister and serve our Lord, IFCA International must have an undying commitment to IFCA International Church Extension. This commitment must make an impact on the *established churches*; it must result in aggressive strategy for *new church planting*; and it must respond with compassion and conviction to the cries of "help" from churches in need of rescue. To

permit our focus, emphasis, planning and effort to major in any one direction is to be guilty of spiritual myopia.

TO MINISTER EFFECTIVELY TO THE ESTABLISHED CHURCHES:

- 1) Report regularly all that God is doing throughout the Regional (Acts 11)
- 2) Involve the people in regular prayer commitment for the new churches and the churches being rescued
- 3) Encourage the people to invest financially in the salvation of souls, and in the planting of new churches
- 4) Invite the members to become involved in "Adopt-A-Church" ministry
- 5) Arrange occasions for people to visit the new churches and the churches in process of being rescued, so as to see and experience "first hand" what God is doing
- 6) Serve the churches through mentoring opportunities, training seminars and personal involvement of Church Extension leadership.
- 7) Participate in the churches in every way possible at their Missions Conferences.

TO CONSISTENTLY PLANT NEW CHURCHES:

- 1) Develop a strategy for planting new churches that will inspire and involve the entire Regional constituency.
- 2) Emphasize the importance of prayer in all the church planting ministry.
- 3) Challenge the established churches to always be looking for places where a Bible class, Sunday school, or youth outreach can be developed
- 4) Enable people to realize that multiplication of churches is more effective than addition. (Acts 16).
- 5) Recruit individuals, couples, and "teams" who have a "heart" for church planting.
- 6) Develop materials for use in church planting endeavors; i.e. initial contacts, mail and telephone evangelism, visitation, organizational, Bible studies, etc.
- 7) Remember that areas where new churches need to be planted will seldom seek us out for help; we must take the initiative, and make church planting a top priority for our time and energy.

TO COMPASSIONATELY RESCUE SICK AND TROUBLED CHURCHES:

- 1) Develop a strategy that clearly identifies our purpose and plan to effect a rescue.
- 2) Establish policies and guidelines of involvement and authority.
- 3) Encourage effectual, fervent prayer for the church and for one another.
- 4) Expect to "take the church where it is" and trust God to enable us to "bring it to where it ought to be".
- 5) Identify those things that **MUST** be changed and those which do not. Some hills are not worth dying for.
- 6) Challenge the people involved to focus on Christ, and thus develop a new vision for ministry. Keeping hope alive is a top priority.

7) Plan means of outreach, evangelism, visitation, and new contacts for the Gospel.

8) Remember that it is often more difficult to revive the sick and wounded than it is to give birth. Therefore, establish a solid base of encouragement and support.

To keep an established rose or church "blooming" takes work. To plant a new rose or church takes work. To rescue and revive a "sick" rose or church takes work. But in each case it's worth our investment. A beautiful rose garden is to be prized! A beautiful "IFCA International Church garden" is to be treasured more than gold or silver. May we never forget the importance of every part of a "healthy Church garden." The result will be "that they are called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified" (Isaiah 61:3).

Oh yes, I was counting in the IFCA International Directory the number of churches where our IFCA International Church Extension agency has had a direct ministry involvement. The number of those which are IFCA International members is 43 established churches, 32 new church plants, and 29 churches which have been rescued.

And 3 times in the Mission's 42 years we have found it necessary to close the church. I still grieve about those.

But ... when I think of the 74 places where the missionaries are still working to bring the churches to maturity, and the potential that these will become established ministries, thriving as a part of our fellowship in IFCA International -- I am indeed grateful to God!

Dr. Roy Sprague and his wife Elvia reside in Lakewood, WA. He has been a member of IFCA International since 1958. He served 30+ years as Executive Director of Northwest Independent Church Extension, and is now the Mission's Minister at Large. As such, he is available for conferences, seminars and pulpit supply. He has served several terms as Chairman of the IFCA Church Extension Council, and is presently a member of the IFCA Executive Committee.

The Makeup of a Valued Youth Ministry

Pastor Troy Thornton

"I really don't see the need for a youth ministry...my kids do just fine without it." I heard these words from the mother of two teens in the church where I had just been hired as Youth Pastor. It was my first full-time Youth Pastorate and had no idea what to say to this mother to help her see the value of a Youth Ministry in her family's life. This conversation brought questions to my mind: *Why is it that some churches have youth ministries that both parents and teens value? Why is it that there are churches where parents and teens alike could just as easily do without the youth ministry and all that it brings?* These questions lead me to the quest to develop a youth ministry that is valuable. Valuable (not just to the teens, their parents and the church) to the kingdom of God. Youth ministries that bring and develop valuable characteristics will in turn be valued by people and by God. The following will focus on five different qualities that make up a valued youth ministry.

1) It is an asset to the family.

A youth ministry must not even attempt to usurp the family as the primary teaching agency of children. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 clearly shows that the family is the unit that God has designed for the nurturing and training of young people in the Truth. A youth ministry is merely an aid to the home. It must encourage family time, not take away from it. It must strengthen the bond between parents and teens, not come between it. It must honor parental prerogatives and wishes, not bring them into question. It must display the parent as the authority. The youth ministry that is valued will not distract from the family dynamic but will add to it.

2) It focuses on what it produces, not what it does.

When one thinks of youth ministry usually the first thing that comes to mind is all kinds of activity and fun. The key to being effective is not doing, but producing. The goal of the valued youth ministry should be the production of disciples of Jesus Christ. Most would agree on this point. Where youth ministries often fail is not missing this point, but failing to focus upon and emphasize it.

When churches promote their youth ministry they often begin with what they do..."Lock-In!"..."Wednesday Night Bible Study"..."Missions Trips!"..."Drama Team Practice"..."Winter Retreat!". Why not take the focus off what the ministry does and put it on what it can produce in the life of a teenager? Promote the idea that your ministry can produce new believers, obedient young people, teenagers who think biblically, young men and women of integrity, leadership, young people that are "Salt and Light". People will value what you produce, not what you do. Activities are good, but they are only a means to an end. Let parents and teens know what your ministry intends to produce in teenagers' lives that will last for eternity.

3) It contributes to the overall body-life.

Sometimes it seems that the "teen room" in the church building is a strange and foreign land. One only ventures into it unless absolutely necessary. Too often the youth ministry can become like the "teen room" itself - disjointed and aloof. Youth ministries all too often just spin off into their own area and never become an active participant in the life of the entire church body. Ephesians 4:4-6 places no age limitation upon being an integral part of Christ's body. A valued youth ministry will be actively involved in the life of the body. Young people should be serving where they can, side by side with adults. Have them involved in special music, working with Sunday school and children's programs, serving in the nursery, performing a skit in a worship service, reading scripture, leading singing, teaching a new chorus to the entire congregation, giving a report from the youth retreat in a service, being a part of a worship team, playing their instrument for congregational worship, and much more. Encourage young people to be attentive and involved in regular services. Plan activities and ministries that involve young people

with adults. Don't allow the youth ministry to be off on its own as a separated part of the body. The youth ministry should be actively involved in and contributing to the overall body-life.

4) It provides leadership and ministry opportunities.

Young people should be given opportunity to exercise and develop leadership and ministerial gifts. A valued youth ministry cannot have a spectator mentality. A valued youth ministry must provide young people the chance to step up, lead and minister alongside their peers. Provide outlets for ministry and leadership for different types of teenagers. Drama, puppets and music are areas that we often see young people involved in and that's great. Yet, they are many other ways to facilitate leadership and ministry. *(Give devotional responsibilities to a young person on a youth trip. Have teens plan games at an activity. Form a committee of students for input and advice on the youth ministry. Involve the young people in the development of plans and vision. Use young people to lead worship for the group. Help them develop a Bible study at their school. Even give them opportunity to teach and preach within the youth ministry itself.)* A valued youth ministry must allow teenagers to discover their spiritual gift(s), leadership abilities, and talents. Then take them and use them where they are right now.

5) It provides a positive atmosphere.

John 3:16 is the gospel in a nutshell. The beauty of John 3:16 is that you hear that you are loved and accepted. The focus of the verse is God's love. The greatest need that young people have is to feel and be loved. A valued youth ministry will provide an atmosphere where teenagers can be loved and accepted. There are many youth groups in churches of all kinds, but there are few youth ministries. The difference between having a group and a ministry is the atmosphere. If young people feel that they are loved and accepted, then the youth ministry can meet their needs whatever they may be. If a teenager does not feel loved and accepted, they may tolerate the ministry but they will not value it. The parent of teenager will love and value the ministry that accepts their child in God's love. Make it a priority of the youth ministry to create an atmosphere where any teenager can walk in and feel they are wanted. This must start with the leadership and involve the young people themselves.

As I stood and talked with the mother who did not see the value of a youth ministry for her family, I realized I could not say anything that would change her mind. The ministry that God would develop would show her the value of youth ministry. That mother became one of our ministries' greatest advocates over the years.

Troy H. Thornton is the Youth Pastor at the Wausau Bible Church in Wausau, WI. Troy is a graduate of Appalachian Bible College and serves on the IFCA International Youth Committee.

Wisconsin Regional Church Extension in the Ukraine

Dr. Paul Thyren

"Daw-bry dyehn" and "spah-see-buh" = "Good day" and "thank you"

My Ukrainian/Russian language skills went from zero to a few simple phrases by traveling to Ukraine to teach in Bible institutes sponsored by the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists. I met Martin Kolczyk, missionary representative for SEND International, at the Wisconsin IFCA Regional Spring Conference in April, 1999. He mentioned the need for teachers from the USA to come to Ukraine to teach in the Bible institutes in order to equip pastors, church planters, Sunday school teachers, and future church leaders.

Part of the Wisconsin Church Extension philosophy of ministry is to equip people with knowledge, skills, and passion for ministry. While WCE is located in Wisconsin, there is no boundary restriction on where to equip people. With the blessing of the WCE Board and Regional Executive Committee, by mid-June I was preparing for 2 trips to Ukraine - one in September and one in November.

I flew from Chicago to London and then on to Kiev arriving on Sept 10. I met my translator, Dima, on Saturday and left for the Bible School in Mukachevo. We traveled by electric train overnight (with sleeping accommodations on the train) for about 16 hours and 475 miles. It is fairly customary in the church services to have 3 preachers each speak about 20 minutes. On Sunday, I was one of the preachers in the Baptist Church in Svalyava not far from the Bible School. The dedication and opening of the new Bible School was held in the Baptist Church in Mukachevo. The church recently put on a large addition to house, feed, and provide classrooms for the students. What an honor to be part of the dedication service (I stood with the leaders during the dedication prayer time.)

Monday morning, I began teaching 36 students on Cults. The students came from the Zakarpati region for a week of classes in Doctrine, Bible, Methods of Teaching, Cults, Pastorology. They ranged in age from 18 to mid-30s -- typical students - full of questions and afraid of tests. Some of the students spoke a little English and with two translators handy, I had a great time interacting with the students. Most of the young men were serving in their churches as preachers or deacons. They hoped to become pastors someday. The young ladies in the class were involved in Christian Education in some capacity in their churches.

Sunday afternoon, Sept 19, I got on the overnight train for Simferopal, 525 miles south of Kiev. Round trip is less than \$20. Sheets, pillow case and towel rental was \$1.50 more. The Bible School in Simferopal met in a church building whose congregation dates back to 1897. This church survived the entire 74 years of communism in the midst of persecution. The assistant director of the school came to know Christ as a teenager. Since he was considered dangerous as a Christian, he was not allowed back into his high school. Teachers came to his house to teach him. It was against the law in the Soviet Union for children to attend church so he was not able to go to church either. One of the pastors I met was fined more than one month's wage for taking his 3 children to a Christmas Eve service.

I taught Genesis - Deuteronomy at the Simferopal School 3-4 hours. each day Monday through Thursday. I had 26 students in my class. Like the students in Mukachevo, the students in Simferopal were eager learners also. We ate lunch with them each day and interacted with them outside of class.

Ukraine is a harvest field of 52 million people living in the second largest country of the former Soviet Union. It is a country going through many transitions. Moving from communism to a free market economy continues to be difficult on the people. The average wage is about \$45-50 per month. The church is facing difficult challenges as well. While people are being saved and baptized as believers, many leadership caliber Christians are immigrating to the USA.

The Union of Evangelical Christian-Baptists is planting about 150 churches per year in Ukraine. The need for trained pastors is tremendous. One of the goals of the UECB is to have a Bible Institute in each of the Ukraine oblasts (states). There are 27 oblasts. SEND International works with 10 Bible institutes operated by UECB.

November 14, Dima, my translator, and I caught the train to Dunaivtsi, which is about 275 rail miles SW of Kiev. The city is about 32,000 people. Forty-two students came to the Khmelnitsky Bible College in Dunaivtsi. They live at the school or with church members for a week and attend classes from 8:30 am until 6:30 pm. I taught Old Testament Survey - Joshua through Song of Solomon for 3 hours each day. Thursday evening the students were in charge of the church service which more than 240 people attended.

My family and I have been supporting a Ukrainian church planter through the IFCA International partnership program since it was begun in 1993 at the Chicago Convention. It was a special blessing to have Vladimir Krykota in my class in Dunaivtsi. We visited about our ministries and our families. We exchanged pictures and gifts. Vladimir attends the IFCA International sponsored Pastor's Conference each time and he is grateful for the books, teaching, and fellowship.

Dima and I left Dunaivtsi Friday evening and arrived back in Kiev at about 6:30 am Saturday. We had breakfast, cleaned up, repacked and left on the 3:30 pm train for Sieverodonetsk (an 18 hr train trip east to the Lugansk area). Alusha met us and we went to church. I sat in the balcony with my winter coat over my sport coat. The churches in some areas can not afford to heat their buildings to much above "not being able to see your breath." The building was full - over 200 people. I couldn't help but wonder how many people in the USA would attend church services 3 or 4 times a week in unheated buildings.

I taught Monday - Wednesday through the Major Prophets in a class of 21 students. Wednesday morning we woke up to a heavy snowstorm, wind, and cold. We had a warm classroom, but no lights. The students enjoyed singing after lunch each day. Their hymnal has the words to 1360 songs. Even though much of the Ukrainian/Russian music is written in a minor key, the words express the joy of the Lord.

Pastor Alexander Girasimovich, the Director of the Lugansk Bible Schools and I visited each evening over tea. He truly has a vision for training quality pastors and Sunday school teachers. Pastor Alexander said that he had recently assisted in planting seven new churches and realized that if the pastors are not equipped to preach the Word of God they will not be able to keep the people coming to church. People want to hear the Word of God.

Thursday morning after the snow had stopped, Alusha drove us to Rovenki where the second Lugansk Bible Institute is located. After a bowl of hot soup, kasha and meat, and a cup of tea, I began my first 4-hour block of teaching. We took short breaks every 50 minutes. Friday, I taught for 8 hours. We went through Major Prophets with 20 students. During breaks or at the beginning of the classes, the students asked ministry questions or about my family.

A friend reminded me about the ministry of multiplication. I had the distinct privilege of teaching 145 students on these trips. Each of them will have the opportunity to teach or preach to how many others in their own churches? How many might come to know Christ through their witness? When we get to heaven and meet our Ukrainian brothers and sisters in Christ, maybe we will understand the impact of our united ministry effort.

Dr Paul G Thyren pastored Grace Bible Church in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin for 13 years and has been the Director of Wisconsin Church Extension since 1987.

The Importance of Planting IFCA International Churches

Rev. Henry Vosburgh

The word "context" has been used many ways by people when discussing religion and ministry. For instance, correctly establishing a Scripture passage's context is essential to sound hermeneutics. Here, *context* is defined by the literary aspects of the passage; i.e., the sentence, the paragraph, the theme, etc. This definition is well reflected by the common phrase "out of context." Discussions in missions philosophy use the word *context* another way. Understanding a target field's situation, culture, geography, etc. is cited by many as needful in determining an approach to Gospel ministry. Yet there can be controversy when discussions about *context* lead to a philosophy of *contextualization*, suggesting the potential for compromises in approaching the Gospel ministry.

Concerning the hermeneutical definition of *context*, very little needs debate since we assert a literal, historical, and grammatical approach to the Scriptures. On the matter of the missions definition of *context*, Church Extension (CE) agencies sometimes are faced with a challenge, although generally not in the areas mentioned above. Rather, CE agencies must deal with questions that have to do with the relational context a given church project is to have. The question can be set forth as follows: **"Are we planting / recovering IFCA International churches or simply Bible-believing churches?"** A related question would be this: **"Should we require our CE projects and personnel to be members of IFCA International, or should we allow the projects and personnel the freedom to choose so or not?"** In this article, I would like to set forth why I believe CE agencies should establish IFCA International churches, requiring both CE personnel and projects to become a part of our fellowship.

My reasons for believing so are based on the "anchors" provided in the fellowship of IFCA International. The matter of a proper ministry context cannot be overestimated in its importance. In our day when relativism has replaced moral and doctrinal absolutes, an individual or church body will be tossed about unless some anchors are weighed to hold the ship of testimony steady. CE agencies are as keenly aware of this need for anchors as anyone, because in so many aspects, CE by nature is to be on the front line of the Great Commission efforts in our relativistic nation. Americans need to be able to answer the questions:

What sets the CE missionary and church project apart from the myriad pastors and churches in the "sea of Christendom?"

What are the marks that make them different and attract my attention and ultimately my commitment?

It is my assertion that a strictly independent church ministry will greatly struggle to provide satisfactory answers to these questions, while membership in IFCA International greatly facilitates their provision. Displaying the answers to these questions is the responsibility of CE personnel and projects, and we do so when by conviction we offer three key anchors provided to us in the relational context of IFCA International.

The Anchor of Truth

Strictly speaking, it should be enough for a believer or a church today to say that the Bible is the sole expression of truth. In our IFCA doctrinal statement, we readily acknowledge the Scriptures as "the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life." Yet we find that in the "sea of Christendom," many nominal Christians and organizations make statements similar to this that cannot be differentiated by people unaccustomed to scrutinizing doctrinal statements. A result is that CE projects trying to establish a solid witness in a community are viewed as just another church with just another pastor. The reality is far different, but the typical American onlooker needs more to see that difference.

A completely independent church must formulate its own expression of the truth. It must rely on its own members to generate, articulate, and defend that statement. In a typical CE ministry, such an endeavor can be a very difficult task. If we maintain a consistent desire for conversion growth as opposed to transfer growth, the equipping process for new believers takes a great deal of time and effort. The potential dangers for an independent ministry waiting for new leaders to become qualified far outweigh the liberty of its solitude.

Having a relational context of IFCA International is extremely beneficial at this point, because the sixteen-point statement of faith already expresses the belief system advanced by the church and pastor. It is our stand, our credo, and our confession; in a world where absolutes tend to be observed no longer, a church must be able to define what constitutes biblical doctrine. The fathers of this fellowship determined that each point of our statement was worthy to include within our collective witness. The adherence to or denial of these truths affects the spiritual lives of people. The relational context of IFCA International provides the formal expression of belief in our statement of faith, and it helps us to offer the anchor of truth to people who risk being capsized by the many waves of doctrine.

The Anchor of Identity

Citing again the need for differentiation in the "sea of Christendom," it is not enough to offer the sole identity of a "Bible-believing church." A strictly independent church will always struggle to establish its identity. From being viewed as cultic to being seclusive, the perceptions people gather are wide-ranging. In church planting, enough hurdles exist at the outset of a project without having to create others. Something more is needed to establish a church identity.

In my short ministry, I am privileged to be the founding pastor of two different churches, and they are both Bible churches. However, to maintain that the name "Bible Church" is sufficient to differentiate a ministry from others today cannot be universally supported. In my part of Indiana, I know of a solidly Charismatic ministry that identifies itself as a "Bible Church." Furthermore, even within our own fellowship, there are sound Baptist churches, Community churches, etc. Names are most often selected because of the unique flavor and circumstance of the immediate localities in which ministries arise. Yet, these churches do not just exist in their respective target areas; they are part of a greater community known as the world! To varying degrees, every church will intersect with that world; and as each church does, the anchor of identity will be incredibly significant.

One of my ministries as a CE director is to help people locate good churches to attend when they are moving to another part of the state or country. It is always a joy to open our IFCA directory and discover a church that shares my identity in that area. About a year ago, the IBCM missionary pastor in Burkesville, KY arrived at his church to find a note on the church door. It was written by an out-of-state family who would be moving to the area in the coming months, and they wanted information about the church. It was provided, and today that family began attending our church plant.

What motivates such pursuits is the anchor of identity. Because we are part of IFCA International, there should be a set of givens that every person can expect when considering our ministries. Those givens are now expressed in our doctrinal, vision, and mission statements. Our goal as a fellowship should be to cultivate these givens, because they become the collective anchor that identifies us in the "sea of Christendom." The relational context of IFCA International provides this.

The Anchor of Unity

Of the three anchors, a strictly independent ministry suffers most without the anchor of unity. John Donne said, "No man is an island entire of itself. Every man is a part of the continent, a piece of the whole . . . if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less." It has become an important call within our fellowship to de-emphasize a self-sufficient mentality and approach to ministry. I happen to like the word "independent" when properly defined; however, there is a certain degree of pride to assert

independence as a pledge to keeping to ourselves. No person or church can be completely self-sufficient. It will have to rely on the ministry of the larger scope of Christ's body beyond itself sooner or later. I observe with the sincerest amount of respect that the only church which proclaimed its self-sufficiency in Scripture is the church of Laodicea when it said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Yet this is the church that the Lord Jesus would expectorate.

The motivation for Church Extension ministry being created in the IFCA was the desire to advance our cause and fellowship into areas of the United States needing our witness. From the very outset, CE leaders knew that this could only be accomplished with the combined efforts of IFCA churches and pastors. Knowing the blessings to be had by uniting in fellowship to each other, today it remains true that CE ministries are advancing our IFCA witness to people who cannot otherwise have access to those blessings. Testimonies concerning the prayers, gifts, and goodwill of unknown believers directed to otherwise isolated churches abound. Knowing that somewhere beyond oneself there are believers with the same faith, the same commitments, the same purposes, vision, and mission offers a sense of being connected and a sense of belonging. These are things to depend on, not be independent of. We all must understand that we are a part of something bigger than just "we ourselves." Believers and churches alike need a familial sense to the larger scope of fellowship. The relational context of IFCA International provides that scope. We are not adrift on the "sea of Christendom"; the anchor of unity exists through our IFCA fellowship.

I sought membership in IFCA International because I believe God led me to become a part of our fellowship. Our fellowship has a doctrinal statement that expresses my system of belief. Our fellowship also provides the construct labeling who I am in the "sea of Christendom." Furthermore, our fellowship serves a rallying place of Christian ministry and practice for all those like-minded to me in truth and identity. These things being so, I would rhetorically pose the question, "Why would CE agencies *not* require fellowship in IFCA?" We get so much in return!

The anchors of truth, identity, and unity that I find expressed in IFCA International are the same anchors that every Bible-centered church needs, holding it firmly in place. Therefore I believe by conviction and of necessity, each Church Extension agency must have the planting and recovery of IFCA International churches as a primary mission.

Rev. Henry Vosburgh has served as the General Director of the Indiana Bible Church Mission since 1993. He was also recently appointed to serve as the General Director of the Illinois Bible Church Mission.

CHAPLAIN'S DIARY
GOD'S GUIDANCE IN CHAPLAINCY MINISTRY
by Chaplains Doug Peterson and Joseph Kraitz

Two of our Army Chaplains share how God guides in His own ways, bringing men into the Chaplaincy and guiding where they will be assigned to serve Him. Chaplain Peterson, currently assigned to Fort Bragg with the Special Forces, begins by recounting how God led him into the Army Chaplaincy.

A little bird was flying south for the winter. It got so cold that the bird froze up and fell to the ground in a large field. While it was lying there, a cow came by and dropped some manure on it. As it lay there in the pile of manure, the bird began to realize how warm it was. The manure was actually thawing it out! He lay there all warm and happy, and soon began to sing for joy. A passing cat heard the little bird singing, and came to investigate. Following the sound, the cat discovered the bird under the pile of manure, promptly dug him out -- and then ate him.

The morals of the story are:

1. Not everyone who drops manure on you is your enemy.
2. Not everyone who digs you out of a pile of manure is your friend.

Circumstances can often be deceptive. Sometimes what appears to be a good thing can bite, and difficult experiences can actually serve as blessings.

The year was 1975. I had separated from active duty in the Air Force and settled in the western US to go to school. A friend offered me the opportunity to join him as a partner in a growing business that he had started the year before. I would become part-owner through investing capital and serving as manager of one of the store locations. It was an offer I couldn't refuse. Before long, I had poured my life's meager savings into the operation and was working 18 hours a day to build our expanding enterprise.

Several months later my mother was finally able to convince me to break away for a couple weeks to visit my grandfather back home in Wisconsin. He was in his last days in a losing battle with cancer. My grandfather and I had been very close -- in many ways "best friends." To watch him die such a horrible death was the most devastating experience of my 23 years.

A few days after Grandpa's funeral, I returned out West. As I walked back into the store, I was stunned. The people running the show were *total strangers*. I discovered that, in my absence, my partner had sold the business! He had left town without a trace. All of my efforts to locate him failed. He had absconded with my share of the sale -- \$5,000.

This low point of my life -- as painful as it was -- actually was a blessing in disguise. Deeply in debt, I re-entered the service (I remembered the steady paychecks!) and was assigned to a unit in Augsburg, Germany. It was in Augsburg in 1977 that my life changed forever. Through the influence of a civilian pastor to the military community I made spiritual commitments that would set the course for the rest of my life. Where I am today, and what I am doing [as an Army chaplain] resulted from that most difficult set of circumstances some 20 years ago. *Now*, I wouldn't trade my experiences for anything.

As we go through painful trials, they may not make much sense *at the time*. Our deep disappointments may involve relationship issues, financial setbacks, health problems, or career adjustments. But they can often mark a positive, lasting change in our perspective and direction in life that we may fully appreciate *only later*. Be open to how the hand of Providence may be leading you.

Interestingly, just three weeks ago (as of this writing) while reading a nationwide periodical, I saw a large advertisement hawking the books, tapes, and seminars of "America's premier financial strategist. . . a millionaire." I was shocked to see his name and picture -- my former partner!

Of course, I would not dream of changing places with him. Enjoying the riches that I possess as a joint-heir with Jesus Christ, and the thrill of seeing Him bring others into infinite and eternal wealth are life's greatest treasure!

CH (MAJ) Doug Peterson

Some people think that assignments in the military Chaplaincy are at the whim of the people in the Personnel office who make assignments. CH (MAJ) Joseph Krintz who is currently assigned to Fort Jackson, South Carolina shares an account of how God guided him to the right assignment at his previous assignment - Fort Hood, Texas.

I am constantly blessed by the Lord's guidance in my life and ministry. How I reached my current assignment at Fort Hood, Texas indicates that the Lord can work His purposes through the personnel system of the Pentagon and at local installations.

I was assigned to Korea and due to rotate back to the United States. I requested to be assigned to a post in Virginia and was told it would happen. However, I received orders to Fort Hood, Texas. Initially, I was to go to Division Artillery at the post, but was switched at the last minute.

I later learned that my present Commander had refused the chaplain who was initially programmed to come to his unit. He wanted a "fundamental" chaplain and had prayed for one to be assigned. I believe that the Lord enabled my assignment to his unit as an answer to prayer.

God continues to show me that He is in control of my ministry and Army Chaplaincy career. He has consistently placed me in the right place (or brings soldiers to me) and gives me the opportunity to witness and bear fruit.

Our men who serve the Lord in the Chaplaincy, military, hospital, prison, police, fire, and corporate experience His hand placing them in the right place at the right time to accomplish His purposes for them and those they touch in ministry.

There are openings in the military Chaplaincy for ordained men under 40 years of age, who meet the academic and physical requirements of the Dept. of Defense. The Reserve Chaplaincy is much in need for Chaplains. If you are looking for challenging opportunities in ministry, consider the Reserve or Active duty military Chaplaincy. I'd be glad to talk with you about it.

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