



CHAPTER FIVE

MISSIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains missiological reflections on the Spiritual Strategy. The previous two Chapters described the practical mission work of a Chinese missionary with a traditional Chinese cultural background. He called his approach a “Spiritual Strategy”, however it is broader than what is usually described as Spiritual Warfare¹¹, but it does contain a deliberate focused and persistent prayer element. It is basically a “spiritual” approach, but then not necessarily incorporating the other aspects of what came to be known as Spiritual Warfare.

This Chapter will be based on the researcher’s analyses of Biblical reasoning, methodology and theory, but will also rest to a large extent on the practical experience gained in the mission work among the Gbandi tribe of Liberia and

¹¹ There is an enemy force that is directly opposed to the Kingdom of God. Satan who is called the god of this world and the prince of the power of the air leads this force. He is the programmer of culture. He influences philosophy, systems of thought, religions, politics and economic systems against the purposes of God. His influence is also directly brought against the body of believers through both corporate attacks as well as on individuals. He is continually scheming and using surprise assaults to frustrate and undermine the purpose of God. We need to be aware of the reality of his influence and stand firm in our resistance to his influences (Wimber 1988:10).

among the Indian people of Lenasia, South Africa. It was found that it is not adequate to use Biblical and missiological theories and strategies because Chiang felt that one must adopt a practical approach with a Spiritual Strategy in mind.

5.1.1 God's Spiritual Strategy

Shenk (1999:105) summarises God's strategy into three stages:

1. The election and sending of Abraham so that "by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves" (Gen 12:3), along with the covenant binding Israel to be the instrument of salvation for the nations.
2. The sending of Jesus Christ (Jh 1:14), the divinely appointed Messiah, who continues the strategy of *pars pro toto* (the one for the many).
3. The sending of the church as an extension of the mission of Jesus Christ (Jh 17:18; 20:21). Each "sending" is from a position of vulnerability and weakness in obedience to God's call to bring healing and salvation to all peoples (Dt 15:15, 16:12; 24:18; 26:5; Phil 2:5-8; Jn 17:18).

5.1.2 Theological Strategy

Shenk continues (1999:106-107) to spell out God's approach.

A. God's Redemptive Mission: The Source

Mission has its source in the nature and purpose of God. God the Creator is none other than God the Redeemer. God's saving purpose can be traced through the calling of Abraham and his descendants to enter into covenant

relationship for the blessing of the nations. This saving purpose is expressed supremely in the sending of God the Son to be the saviour of the world. God's redemptive strategy stands over all history and points to the goal, the kingdom of God.

B. Jesus Christ: The Embodiment

The Old Testament introduces the notion that God's redemptive strategy is tied to the coming of the Messiah (Is 11: 1-9; 42:14, 53; 61:1-3). The synoptic gospels emphasise the continuity between Old and New Testaments - that which was promised is now being fulfilled (Lk 4:16-21). When the incarnate God enters the human scene, it is as a helpless baby (Jn 1: 14), signifying both identification and vulnerability. Jesus inaugurates his public ministry by proclaiming the reign of God (Mt 4:17; Mk 1:15) and embodies that reign, demonstrating its power and interpreting its meaning for the lives of his listeners. That embodiment projected a new way of being. He came as one who serves and who was self-emptying (Phil 2:5-8), but his was a transforming presence. From his ministry emerged a new people from and in the midst of all nations. "Through that strategy of persuasion through his suffering Servant, God created a like-minded people", wrote David Shank, "who are servant to all peoples for their blessing and salvation. The strategy of Christian mission is nothing more-nor less-than participation in carrying out God's own strategy. Its shape is that of a cross" (Shank 1973: 1). The risen Christ commissions "like-minded people" to continue the mission of redemption in his name (Mt 28:18-20; Jn 20:19-22). They will take their strategic clues from their Messiah leader.

C. Holy Spirit: The Power

Building on the work of Roland Allen, Harry R. Boer (1961) demonstrated how central the Holy Spirit is to mission. The Spirit is the primary agent of the mission of the Messiah. Missionary obedience is first of all an act of submission to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Strategic thinking ought to begin and end with the prayer "Your will be done". Within this ambit there is ample space for the hard thinking involved in strategy-making, but it will be held in check by the awareness that the Holy Spirit is sovereign. Because mission is the will of God, the Holy Spirit is the driving force in mission. The primary purpose of the Spirit is that the messianic reign be actualised.

D. Church: The Instrument

At each stage the sending is for the purpose of bringing blessing to the nations. In his life and ministry Jesus Christ has modeled all that it means to embody the life of God. It results in a new community that is characterised by shalom and a passion to extend life to the nations across lines of race, class, sex, and nationality. Thus the church continually draws on that model for its own ministry. Whatever does not build the new community must be rejected. Actions that produce alienation or bondage are contrary to the gospel.

E. Cultures: The Context

Strategic thinking that is consistent with the other elements of this framework will respect the varied contexts of mission. All human cultures are equally the means through which people hear the gospel "in their own tongue". The apostle Paul insisted that he was prepared to "become all things to all people" in order that they might hear the gospel. Strategic thinking based on master

plans far removed from a particular context must be treated with great suspicion.

5.1.3 Pentecost and missions

It is of utmost importance for a Spiritual Strategy to be based on the understanding that the Holy Spirit is today's prime mover in mission. As Shenk (1999:13) says:

The Genesis account of creation notes that “the Spirit of God (‘wind,’) was moving over the face of the waters” (Gn 1:2b) as God began creating an ordered universe out of chaos. At the beginning of the mission of the Messiah, John the Baptist declared, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him” (Jn 1:32).

In both creation and the new creation, God the Spirit is the agent. The parting words of Jesus to his disciples were the promise that the Spirit would come to them, and that coming was linked directly to the continuation of the messianic mission (Lk 24:45f.; Acts 1:8). At Pentecost the disciples experienced what they interpreted to be the fulfillment of the prophet Joel's prophecy. The Holy Spirit was made manifest to them as wind, fire, and prophetic speech (Acts 2). Wind, or breath represents life. The Spirit is God's breath of life. A special dignity was conferred on humankind at creation when God breathed into Adam “the breath of life.” The Hebrew scripture described the Messiah as the one in whom God's Spirit would be fully present, infused with God's life, anointed by the Spirit.

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit demonstrated the new *koinonia* God was creating. Because of its rebellion at Babel humankind was sentenced to live out the consequences of the “confusion of languages”. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit reversed Babel. A new people, drawn from the nations, whose linguistic particularity is the means for each to hear about “the mighty acts of God” (Acts 2:6, 11), is called forth. Its unity is expressed neither through culture nor ritual but in worship of the God revealed in Jesus the Messiah” (Acts 2:14-36).

As Harry Boer said (1961:62):

Hendrik Kraemer calls attention to the fact that at the very moment in which the Church was born her missionary task also began. Church means missions and missions mean Church. The first activity of the Church was a prophetic missionary witness. The descent of the Spirit made the disciples apostles, missionaries. One might almost say, it branded them as apostles. At Pentecost the whole of God’s redemptive purpose with the world was for a moment set off in bold relief. The Beginning and the End was revealed: the Beginning of the Church’s missionary course throughout the world, and the End when the whole world shall have been gained for the gospel. Pentecost is the fulfillment of the promise: “You shall receive the power of the Holy Spirit and you shall be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8).

The urge to witness is inborn in the Church, it is given with her nature, with her very being. She cannot not-witness. She has this being because of the Spirit who indwells her. Pentecost made the Church a witnessing Church because at Pentecost the witnessing Spirit identified Himself with the Church and made

the Great Commission the law of her life. At Pentecost the witnessing Spirit became the Soul of Christ's body, and the mandate of Christ the law of its nature (Boer 1961:122).

5.1.4 Form and Meaning of Spiritual Strategy

Strategy involves form, method, the way of doing things. The form should serve the meaning, the purpose. It is therefore important to let the Holy Spirit lead the way, so that when the meaning changes, the form, the method or strategy should also change. The forms of the strategy should never be allowed to become so fixed as to function as a law or bondage to the missionary, but should always be open to change.

Variety in forms is important because people and situations change all the time. However, God (the Ultimate Meaning) never changes. Although Jesus never changes - "He is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), He changed his approach. God is trying to move us. John the Baptist was a unique person, very unusual in his habits and clothes. Some people may say, "No I want no part of that revival – it is not for me". Jesus however came in a totally different style. He (probably) wore conventional clothes and He associated with all types of people. He attended a wedding in Cana and ate with sinners. Some said that this was what they were looking for, while others rejected Him because of that.

Christ – as well as John – was critical of tradition, of form. They emphasised meaning. John said to the crowds coming out to be baptised by

him:

"You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'. For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire" (Luke 3:7-9).

It is not good to blindly hold on to age-old traditions; we should rather move on, change and adapt to new generation situations. Life is a variable and is continuously in the process of change. Only death stops change, but as long as there is life there is movement, change, growth and variety. Every time God created something there was movement and change. Nothing God created was like a copy of something that had existed before, but everything was fresh, new and original.

God is very creative, so our strategy should also be creative and not remain the same. God created us as unique and the essence of life is our ability to be unique. Man is good at making copies, producing fakes and doing imitations, but God excels and specialises in creating originals. One should be free to be oneself. We need to be released from the mindset of trying to be a carbon copy of someone else. There is variety in the kingdom of God. If we can grasp that our God is awesome, diverse, interesting, abundant and unfathomable, we will no longer conform to rigid patterns when it

comes to singing, praying and especially expounding God's word. We need to allow the Holy Spirit freedom to work in our lives. When we restrict the movement of the Holy Spirit we are attempt to put the Holy Spirit in a box and this will not be effective. God is not obligated to function within any framework, limitations and traditions of man.

For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (2 Corinthians 3:6). **Tradition and form will kill, but the Spirit gives new meaning.** Some people receive something unique from God, and then try to pass it on to or even force it on to others. Sometimes they train others in certain methods and techniques, but it is not the method and technique that should be emphasised. The focus should be on God – it is His prerogative to choose the circumstances, method and person He wants to use to achieve His divine purposes. Paul did not use his shadow (like Peter in Acts 5) to heal; he used handkerchiefs (Acts 19). In one incident Jesus used his saliva. It is evident by the examples of Paul, Peter and Jesus that God is in no way restricted. He uses a diversity of methods and techniques. The Biblical examples could be continued indefinitely.

Mission strategy or tradition should not become a law, or a bondage to missionaries. Tradition or denomination can become an idol. Sometimes God has to crush our tradition. God is not pleased when we take the anointing of one generation and force it upon another, or box it in with a hermetic seal.

“Hezekiah did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just

as his father David had done. He removed the high places smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it (It was called Nehushtan) (II King 18:3-4).

Moses made the snake in obedience to the command of God and now the king broke everything, but still did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Why? Because the meaning got lost. What does God do when we begin to worship according to our own methods and traditions? He sends someone like Hezekiah to crush the entire effort. God is shaking our traditions – crushing our Nehushtan. Our security is in our traditions and in our background. We trust in the things that we used to do, but the Lord wants us to depend completely on the Holy Spirit. We must not make our own traditions or depend on past revivals. God wants us to change because he wants us to communicate His Word to a dying world.

Paul had a Spiritual Strategy with an understanding heart.

“Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but

am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Corinthians 9:19-22).

Despite all criticism, Paul was prepared to do whatever it takes in order to win souls. He was willing to try new ways –even to be a servant to all men.

Jesus' Spiritual Strategy was characterised by variety. Jesus witnessed and ministered to people corporately as well as individually. He called Andrew and Peter individually and He also attended the wedding in Cana. In John 3, when Jesus talks to Nicodemus, he said; "You must be born again". When He spoke to religious people He challenged them, but when he spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well, He did not say; "You must be born again the wind blows wherever it pleases." Jesus in His wisdom asked if He could have a drink.

When an old form (person) failed, **God created or called a new form**. When the old form fails because the meaning might be wrong, God always makes something new. Form does not last forever because meaning is more important than form. In the New Testament Jesus castigated the Pharisees, who kept the forms of circumcision, the Sabbath day and the Old Testament laws and commands, including the Ten Commandments, but they lost the meaning. Jesus describes them as worshipping Him with their lips, while their hearts are far from Him. The axe is at the roots of the tree that does not repent and produce fruit – it will be cut down! This means that the old tradition

will be cut down if it does not take on a new meaning. Form is a strategy, a method, it can never be the ideal, but new meaning is important and necessary.

In the New Testament the followers of Jesus were called Christians, meaning Christ's followers or Disciples of Christ. Christians were totally different from the Pharisees and Sadducees - they were a new concept. Jesus said that new wine should not be put into old wineskins because they will burst. New wine must be put into new wineskins – nobody uses new cloth to repair old clothes because the new cloth will shrink and the tear will be enlarged. Old skin is like tradition: inflexible! New wine must have new skin because it is more flexible.

5.1.5 Spiritual Strategy in the Light of God's Kingdom

5.1.5.1 Introduction

The Spiritual Strategy outlined in this thesis should also be understood in the context of the biblical concept of the Reign of God. The Bible can be read as a Kingdom Story. God is the King and all those who believe in Him are His subjects. However, one rebellious angel¹² and his hordes had become an opposition force and ensnared mankind into sinning and turning away from

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Isaiah 14:12 says, "How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations."

God. A history of treachery had thus begun. In God's mercy, He has been calling mankind through His own people to come back to Him and be His subjects once more.

In the Old Testament era, God anticipated His chosen people, the Israelites, to be His witnesses in the world: "...all people on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:3). The Israelites failed to accomplish God's will. During the New Testament times God, through His Church (Christians) continued to invite mankind to return to Him: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations... "(Matthew 28:19).

In its mission the Church should strive to be Kingdom-minded and emphasise Kingdom growth, for the Church is only a process that leads to God's eternal Kingdom. The Almighty God has irrevocably committed His pure and holy love to a group of human beings that He has created on one of the tiniest planets in the universe (Wang 1999:1). This Kingdom Concept is embedded in the Bible from the beginning to the end of time..

5.1.5.2 The Inauguration of the Kingdom

God's kingship is both universal and covenantal. When he created the heavens and the earth by his Word and when he created the first human couple in his own image and likeness, it was inevitable that from that time onward he would exercise a loving and preserving control over his creation. This can be described as his universal kingship. He is the source of all authority and he has decreed his ultimate triumph over all things, particularly

the nations (Glasser 1989:31): “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and families of the nations shall worship before Him. For dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations” (Psalm 22:28, 29).

There are three necessary components that constitute a kingdom, namely, the king, the people and the territory. God is our King and we are His people. As to the territory, in a narrower sense, the Kingdom is in the believers' heart (Luke 17:21); in a broader sense, this is our Father's world - all nations, all peoples and all creatures belong to Him. His Kingdom fills the earth (Wang 1999:3).

5.1.5.3 The Usurpation of the Kingdom

Satan was originally a mighty angel created by God. Instead of being grateful and loyal to God, he was proud and he wanted to be equal with God. He rebelled against God (Is. 14:12-15), fell and became the enemy of God. Satan knew that he could not overcome God in a direct way, so his method was to destroy God's creation. Since Adam and Eve were the climax of God's creation, they became Satan's natural target who fell under his treachery.

God's people should have been His obedient children. Now they were removed from the presence of God and lived under Satan's domain (John 14:30). At this point Satan for the time being usurped God's sovereignty and corrupted mankind (Wang 1999:5).

5.1.5.4 The Spiritual Battle of the Kingdoms

Adam and Eve sinned and fell, plunging them into gloom. But God's will shall not be thwarted by human failures. God gave Adam a third son Seth in place of Abel (Genesis 4:25). But Satan again corrupted the children of Seth to a degree that "the thoughts of his heart was only evil all time" (Genesis 6:5). God's wrath came upon that generation in the form of the flood, but God allowed mankind to continue through the house of Noah. And again Satan corrupted Noah's children that they glorified not God but themselves through the building of the Tower of Babel. God once more responded by confusing their language and scattering them upon the face the earth (Genesis 11:1-9). This seesaw warfare has not ceased till this day (Wang 1999:6).

5.1.5.5 Kingdom Spiritual Strategy Strikes Back – Through Israel

The Lord said to Abram:

'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse; and all people on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:1-3).

The first eleven chapters of Genesis give us a record of repeated degeneration

of humanity, which resulted in the flood and the dispersion – a depressing and hopeless picture. But in Chapter 12 with the calling of Abram (Abraham) we begin to see a ray of hope, purpose and direction.

In Chapter 12 God made a covenant with Abraham. The first part of the covenant was a threefold blessing to Abraham and Israel – a great nation, a great blessing and a great name (Wang 1999:7). Abraham should be regarded as “the pioneer in mission”, the spiritual forefather of all the people of God scattered throughout all the races of mankind (Glasser 1989:55). The second part of the covenant was a responsibility for Abraham and the people of Israel, “You will be a blessing (to others) all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:2-3).

However, Israel proved to be an ungrateful and unfaithful people. They were interested only in the first part of the covenant (receiving blessing for themselves), but were utterly uninterested in the second part (be a blessing to others). Being an arrogant and self-centred people they have never really espoused a national desire to make known to other nations the love of Jehovah God. They have utterly failed in God's calling. In fact, the Old Testament is mainly a history of the failure of Israel.

5.1.5.6 Kingdom Spiritual Strategy Strikes Back – Through the Church of Jesus Christ

- **The Beachhead**

“But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son,

born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full right of sons" (Galatians 4:4,5).

The New Testament teaches the universal kingship of God. Jesus Christ is described as "the Ruler of kings on earth" who in the Last Day will be fully revealed as the Lord, God, the Almighty, the One who "reigns" (Revelation 1:5, 19:6) (Glasser 1989:31). The Son of God, Jesus Christ, came to the world to redeem mankind; that men may be saved by faith and return to the Kingdom of God. But "the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (I John 5:19). Jesus referred to Satan as "Prince of the world" (John 14:30). Undeniably, ever since Adam and Eve succumbed to Satan's temptation, the whole world became Satan's captives and followed him. But through Jesus Christ, the Kingdom struck back into Satan's domain.

Especially Matthew's gospel reminds us that His thinking was centred on the gospel of the Kingdom and His message focussed on the coming of the Kingdom (Matthew 4:17, 23, 5:3, 6:9-10, 10:5-7, 16:19, 24:14).

- **The Mission of the Church**

God established the church through Christ and send the Spirit to work in the church. What was not accomplished through Israel ("All peoples on earth will be blessed through you"), was to happen through the church. Here we see the parallel between the Great Commission Scripture of the Old Testament and the one in the New Testament, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Matthew 16:15) (Wang 1999:10).

Before the first coming of Christ, God's plan of salvation revolved around the nation of Israel. After Christ's resurrection, the salvation plan shifted from Israel to the church. "Therefore I tell you that the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit" (Matthew 21:43). The church is therefore "A chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" (1 Peter 2:9).

The early church, in a short span of 70 years, spread the gospel throughout the holy city, the holy land, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome and the entire Mediterranean region! Beginning from the 4th century, Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire. During the next millennium the church enjoyed state support and outward growth, but often had lost its Biblical faith and true spirituality.

- **Global Missionary and Revival Movements**

Two centuries after the Reformation God used the Pietists, the Brethren, the Puritans, the Methodists and a host of servants like Zinzendorf, Carey, Morrison, Livingstone, Sundar Singh, Taylor and Judson amongst others to spearhead the modern global missionary movement.

The Spirit of God also initiated spiritual awakenings in many places of the world and true revivals broke out in scores of nations, such as the Great Awakening in America (1734-1744), Korean Revival (1903), Welsh Revival (1904), Manchurian Revival (1908), Hsinhwa Revival (1909), Shanghai Revival (1925), Shantung Revival (1931), etc. During these spiritual visitations God used His servants such as Wesley, Tennent, Edwards, Whitefield, Moody,

Finney, Roberts, Goforth, John Sung, etc. to purify and invigorate churches both in the east and the west (Wang 1999:12).

The Student Volunteer Movement in the late 19th century once more stirred up interest in worldwide missions. The two World Wars have paradoxically both hindered and strengthened the missions movement. While slowing down the mission sending efforts, they inadvertently opened the eyes of the evangelicals as well as the liberals to see the "real world", the reality of sin, the cruelty of man and the dire need of a Saviour! These and other factors greatly contributed to the tremendous growth of evangelical fervour from the 1950's.

- **World Evangelisation Movements**

Especially in evangelical circles the last third of the century was marked by great activity. A series of world evangelisation congresses took place under the leadership of Billy Graham, Carl Henry and others: Berlin (1966), Lausanne (1974), Pattaya (1981) and Lausanne II (1989). These gatherings have given enormous impetus to churches of the world towards the fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission. It has also given birth to various national and regional evangelisation movements, among them the Chinese CCCOWE Movement (Wang 1999:12).

The second Lausanne Congress in 1989 gave birth to the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement. This Movement has conducted two global Consultations: Seoul (1995) and South Africa (1997). The third one, scheduled to take place at the end of the year 2000 in Jerusalem, could not take place because of the tensions in that region.

- **Return of the Kingdom Forces**

The world has never witnessed such a burst of the spreading of the gospel as in the previous decades. Knowledge and tools for global missions are unprecedented. More importantly, God has raised up prayer movements in many parts of the world and through these intercessions the burden and task of world evangelisation have gained tremendous new momentum (Wang 1999:13).

From the beachhead of Bethlehem, throughout the past 2 millennia, the good news has advanced to every corner of the earth, rescuing people from Satan's domain into Christ's Kingdom.

The church is God's royal legion. Its duty is to obey God's command, do battle for Him and accomplish His mission. If the church expects to have an abundant and victorious life, Christians and church leaders must espouse a new understanding and attitude toward the church.

- **Spiritual Strategy and the proclamation of the Kingdom**

“The seventh angel sounded his trumpet and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he will reign forever and ever' (Revelations 11:15).

Revelation 11:15 is a message which God's people have been waiting for thousands of years – the proclamation of the Kingdom's return. The theme is

the Kingdom. It includes Christ's Kingdom (the Millennium) and God's Kingdom (the Kingdom Eternal). This proclamation signals that the nations of the world will be restored from the hands of the usurper, Satan, into the hands of, Christ, the rightful owner. This is an all-important declaration. But the time when Satan will lose all control of the world will have to wait until the Second Coming of Christ and after the last war on earth (Revelation 20:10).

The proclamation fulfilled the vision of Daniel (Daniel 2:31-45). The rock, which represents the Kingdom of God, will smash all human kingdoms and will fill the whole world. God will reign forever. The proclamation also responded to the desire and longing of Prophet Zechariah, "The Lord will be King over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord and His name the only name" (Zechariah 14:9).

"Christ rejected Satan's offer of the kingdom of the world (Matthew 4:8,9). Now the time has come and His salvation plan is fulfilled. He will receive back His Kingdom legally, rightfully and ethically. Angels in heaven made this proclamation ahead of time as a *fait accompli*. They know that every word of God will be fulfilled. These proclamations are as good as accomplished facts, unalterable and nonnegotiable (Wang 1999:16).

- **Spiritual Strategy and the realisation of the Kingdom**

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and first earth had passed away and there is no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City; the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride

beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men and He will live with them. They will be His people... He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:14).

Though banished and forlorn on the island of Patmos, God granted John magnificent visions of things to come as well as to see the New Jerusalem. Revelation 20 also foretold the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah, "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered" (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22). After the awful scenes of the bottomless pit, the final war, the final judgement and the lake of fire, the 21st chapter brought us a holy, beautiful and serene world.

His Kingdom is hereby fully recovered and restored. He will reign forever and ever. This is our Father's world. We are His people and his soldiers. And we are commissioned to be the light and salt in this present dark world, to fulfil His Great Commission and to hasten the Lord's return (Wang 1999:20).

5.2 THE INCARNATIONAL APPROACH

5.2.1 Incarnational Missiology as Spiritual Strategy

5.2.1.1 Introduction

When asked why Chiang was willing to live with Black people in their community and what kind of theology moved his heart to do so, he honestly had to say that he naturally moved in without any theology to convince him. After deeper reflection, however, he thinks that two things were foundational: the one underlying reason might have been an incarnational theology, but the other has something to do with the Chinese mentality.

In this paragraph he will deal at length with the incarnational approach, but it is necessary first to make a few observations about the Chinese character in general. Chinese people are in a number of ways closer to the people of the third world countries.

- Firstly they are not too different with regards to a general quality of life.
- Chinese people generally do not want to impose changes onto other people and they do not want to be changed themselves either. They prefer to keep a low profile in other cultural societies and mind their own business. Chinese people prefer to blend in peacefully and harmoniously into a new culture and have no interest in ruling people or introducing drastic changes. Because of these characteristics, it appears that Chinese people would not encounter much difficulty in working in the third world context or becoming missionaries.
- Thirdly, they also have experienced humiliation by the hands of some Western colonials. They understand what people of the Third World have been subjected to. Therefore, hopefully, Chinese missionaries are inclined not to

repeat the same mistakes when they reach out to other cultures.

Furthermore, Western missionaries came to China since 1840 specifically the Mainland and Taiwan. After the Second World War, Taiwan faced severe poverty. Out of goodwill many American Christians shipped relief goods such as clothing, rice, flour, butter and milk to Taiwan. To ensure that these goods reach the people in need, the donors preferred the church leaders to distribute them rather than the Taiwanese government. The church leaders themselves were very poor and many didn't receive salaries. So, the drums of relief material not only benefited the people, but also posed a great temptation to the leaders. Some pastors opened the drums preferentially and removed the best clothes for themselves. Others became so greedy that they sold the goods in private and pocketed the money themselves. Some were imprisoned for these actions. On the other hand because of the attraction of these free gifts, almost all churches expanded rapidly as if a revival was experienced by them.

Not unexpectedly there developed various views of Western missionaries. Whilst missionaries were generally admired because of the help given, other Chinese rejected all Westerners out of patriotism. Some indeed saw the missionaries as gods of wealth. They tried to benefit by contact with them. Some even acted as if the white missionaries were kings and almost acted as obedient puppies before them. The Western missionaries would easily be deceived because they were unable to tell which brothers were true or false.

When the American aid ceased after a few years, the bubble burst. The

number of members in many churches decreased and soon everything went back to normal. Many pagans took the opportunity to mock the Christians, saying, "the Christian religion is a rice religion". They disliked and criticised Christianity because they regarded it as a religion using bait (goods) to attract people.

5.2.1.2 Incarnation

When Chiang first worked amongst the Gbandi tribe as a missionary, he did not understand what was meant with the word "incarnation" until the day that he went to a village after 10pm to teach the Bible. As it was dangerous to drive a car on a bumpy road, he slept over that night. He was planning to go back home the next day. He was prepared with a mosquito net and blanket. He new there was lot of mosquitoes in Liberia. After hanging the mosquito net and preparing the blankets, he stuck his legs under the blankets. After only 5 minutes, his legs were itching unbelievably. Using the torch to check what was wrong with his legs and why they were itching while inside the mosquito net, he realised that the beds of the Gbandi people were riddled with fleas. It was the fleas that caused the itching! He then started to understand what was meant with "incarnation".

If a father has five children he would want his eldest son to become a doctor, his second son to become an artist, his third son to become a computer technician, his fourth son to become a musician and his last son to become a pastor. But God has only one son. He didn't send his son to this world to become a businessman or a computer technician or to choose any other

occupation. God has only one son and his first choice was for his Son to become a "Missionary". That means to become a "Missionary" in God's eyes is the most important and greatest, most honourable task. I've been a Missionary since 1982 and I've always felt it to be a real honour. I've never regretted it or ever had to feel ashamed.

Jesus was born in a multicultural context. He had to pass through at least six different cultures: Heavenly culture, Jewish culture, Samaritan culture, Roman culture, Greek culture and Egyptian culture.

His name is called "Emmanuel" which means, "God with us". "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with us. We will be his people." Our God is a mission-minded God. "The word became flesh who made his dwelling among us... full of grace and truth."

You do not have to go to a Holy Land to seek him. For He comes to you. The invisible God becomes visible. The Untouchable God becomes touchable. As John said: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched ... this we proclaim concerning the world of life (1 Jn 1: 1). He is not just a Book, but a living being, not just knowledge, or a theory, but He is a true-life example.

He moved among the people, suffered their afflictions, had much to say, but said it in a humble way, all the while blessing people with his presence, touching lepers, lifting up the lame healing the sick, and giving

back children to their parents, washing his disciple's feet, His kingdom was not of this world, He was not interested in the measures of worldly success, but to live out and erect signs of his Kingdom in the world" (Kritzinger, Meiring, Saayman 1994:123).

"Faith without deeds is dead" (James 2.26). Faith without action is meaningless, Pagans continue searching for their gods, but our God is the spirit who inhabits human form, he came searching for us, "for the son of man came to seek and to save what was lost". This is the Incarnation of God". Each of us also needs to become across cultural missionary who lives among the people and not apart from them.

Incarnation is a theological term for the coming of God's Son into the world as a human being. The term itself is not used in the Bible, but it is based on clear references in the New Testament to Jesus as a person "in the flesh" (Romans 8:3; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 1:22). The Incarnation is the centre of our Christian faith. The choice of the Son of God in assuming a human body and nature is a graciously voluntary act. The Lord Jesus Christ is one person with two natures indissolubly united, the one nature being that of the eternal Son of God, the other that of man, in all respects human, "yet without sin". The incarnation is absolutely without parallel in history. The marvelous thing is that in Jesus, God Himself began to live a fully human life. As the apostle Paul declared, "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). The capacity of Jesus to reveal God to us and to bring salvation depends upon Him being fully God and fully man at the same time.

God accepted human nature in order to show humanity what love is. This is probably one of the reasons why God created human beings with bodies – so that they could practice loving one another.

Christianity advocates that "the Word became flesh", which means that Christians would also reach out into the world. Buddhism, in contrast, advocates that "the flesh became the World" and renounces the mundane world. Buddhists think the physical body is evil and full of sinful desires. They therefore attempt to become ascetics and deny the desires of their bodies. The Christian faith suggests that we should descend into the sinful world and accompany the suffering people. We should live amongst them like the incarnational God who dwells among us. "Now the dwelling of God is with men and he will live with them" (Revelation 21:3). This is utmost love.

Also in Islam there is no concept of the incarnation – Muslims do not believe that God would become flesh and live among suffering people, shed blood and die for our sins. It is unthinkable that God could do that. In their way of thinking, if God dies, He is not God after all.

5.2.1.3 Jesus' Incarnational life

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Jesus is different from the prophets because the prophets only brought words, but Jesus brought His life and words. The supreme typification of Jesus' ministry is, not that "he spoke to us", but that he

“lived among us”. Therefore, the Christian message is a life message and not simply a word message (Kraft 1991:41). God brings the message of love by personalising that love. He brings us the message of truth by becoming truth (John 14:6). He demonstrates his relationship and commitment to human beings by becoming a human being and uniting with us. Jesus participated fully in all that it means to live a human life. But if Jesus were merely a man, no matter how great, there would be no significance in drawing attention to His bodily existence. The marvellous thing is that in Jesus, God Himself began to live a fully human life. As the apostle Paul declared, “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). The capacity of Jesus to reveal God to us and to bring salvation depends upon Him being fully God and fully man at the same time.

Furthermore, His goal was a personal relationship with His respondents. He wanted to build a relationship with himself, not merely knowledge of him (Kraft 1991:40). Jesus modeled the closest kind of person-to-person relationship. Jesus crossed the bridge and stayed, even becoming touchable, audible, observable, rejectable in horizontal relationships with his creatures. Jesus then modeled with his disciples when he invested the short time of his ministry in twenty-four-hour-a-day interaction with the Twelve (Kraft 1991:12).

Almost all mankind is in search of heroes, a wealthy hero, a thinking hero, or a spiritual hero. However, Jesus did not come into this world as an angel, superman or king. He came to us as an ordinary man. It was possible for him to be hungry, thirsty, tired and even die. If Jesus had never died, he would then be like an angel and stayed distant from mankind.

“Jesus chose to communicate by life, in utter identification with men and women. He, like them, knew weariness, hunger, sorrow, grief, keen disappointment and rejection, even by those who were closest to Him. He participated fully in their lives, whether in the joys of a wedding feast or in the foreboding atmosphere of a simple meal, eaten in the shadow of His coming death” (Nida 1990:33).

In Philippians 2:6-7 Jesus is spoken of as one “who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness”.

5.2.1.4 Paul's Incarnational Life

The apostle Paul endorses the same principle in I Corinthians 9:19-22. He, like Jesus, became a part of the group he sought to win in order to be correctly understood by them. He became a Jew to the Jews, a Gentile to the Gentiles, weak to the weak, rich to the rich, “so that by all possible means I might save some” (Kraft 1991:16). Paul lived with the local church leaders for them to follow him as he followed Jesus.

5.2.1.5 Incarnation in Practice

Today, all over the world, a large number of missionaries appear to have ignored this principle. They assumed incorrectly that the locals should learn their language, their customs, appreciate their kind of music, go to their places

of worship at their appointed times, adopt their life-styles and associate with their kind of people (Kraft 1991:17). There seems to be two types of missionaries in the mission field. One type stays in the missionary compound far away from the local people - this can be likened to God coming in the form of an angel. The other type is the incarnate missionary who does not live in a mission compound but among the local people.

There are merits in the "Angel Style" missionary approach and it is understandable that this method may be often used.

- Loneliness can be avoided. Missionary co-workers and their families live together, therefore they are able to communicate with and care for each other.
- Culture shock is avoided. They speak the same language and have the same culture. They can experience more security and privacy. They can also enjoy and benefit from quiet times. They have clothing, water and food. They have good education, security and large, comfortable homes with gardens, playgrounds, soccer fields and swimming pools. They may be in the mission field, but they are allowed to retain their previous lifestyles.

I know of such an example in Monrovia in Liberia. At ELWA (Eternal Love Winning Africa) there a broadcasting station, a hospital and a missions school and in a large camp where approximately 200 missionaries live together. They do not venture out into the Liberian villages where there is no water or electricity. Outside the water is dirty and malaria abounds. By staying in the ELWA camp, the missionaries can function effectively, remain healthy and the

children can continue with their schooling. However, they are still staying in America, figuratively speaking, and created a second America. They are not incarnated.

The net effect is detrimental because

- These types of missionaries are over protected, just like a prince who does not go beyond his palace walls. By not visiting the people, they cannot see their suffering and get to know their real needs and cannot be moved by compassion in order to be effective missionaries.
- This type of missionary will never understand the culture of the mission field. He only visits the people twice a week, totaling 4 hours; whereas the incarnate missionary is in the heart of the mission field on a 24 hours standby. One year of the work of an incarnate missionary is equivalent to 7 years of the work of a compound missionary. A compound missionary is not of much help to the problems of the local people because water from afar cannot quench a nearby fire. Jesus has a better influence on mankind than angels have because He lived among people.
- Compound missionaries cannot develop a good relationship with the local people because they cannot and do not identify with them. Incarnate missionaries live among the local people, therefore they see the people, visit them regularly and have a good relationship with them. Consequently it is easy for the people to accept the missionaries, identify with them, visit them and share their problems with them. Proverbs 27: 10 says it is "better a

neighbour nearby than a brother far away". The Chinese say: "Distant relatives are not as helpful as close neighbours".

I also quoted the Life Challenge strategy in Lenasia in South Africa. The missionaries preferred to live 50 km away in White areas, which are cleaner, safer and have better houses. This meant that all of the prayer meetings and co-workers meetings were held in White areas. The LC missionaries did not incarnate with Indians, but they expected the Indians to follow their style because it was seen as the best way. As the Indian people could not – or would not – reach their standard, the Indians gave up. Eventually the Johannesburg LC missionaries, feeling ineffective, also decided to leave the ministry. They worked independently with their own door-to-door personal evangelism. They neither co-operated nor communicated with local Indian churches or pastors.

In the Third World countries poor people make up at least half of the population. One third of them are starving. We need a kind of theology that is specially suited for the poor. This theology needs to be so simple that even a street sweeper can understand it.

Liberian people told me, "Do not teach us Western theology because the more we listen to it, the more we fail to understand. Just teach us the Word of God, the Bible". If the Liberian people must first learn and understand English, Western culture, Western theology and only after that be expected to understand the Bible, they will have lived up their whole lives without understanding the gospel. Missionaries need to study widely in missiology

and theology; they need a profound knowledge of the Bible and of hermeneutics. On the other hand, though, what is necessary is a very simple theology and an easy Bible study method for uneducated people.

“All divine communication is essentially incarnational, for it comes not only in words but in life. Even if a truth is proclaimed only in words, it would have no validity until it is transformed into real life. Only then would the Word of life become life to the receptor. The words are, in a sense, nothing in and of themselves. Even as wisdom is emptiness unless lived out in behavior, so the word is void unless related to experience. In the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, the Word (the expression and revelation of the wisdom of God) became flesh. This same fundamental principle has been followed throughout the history of the church, for God has constantly chosen to use not only words but human beings as well to witness to His grace; not only the message, but the messenger; not only the Bible, but the church”

(Nida 1990:32).

In the third world people need a lot of miracles, because they are very poor. There are hardly any doctors and town people die every day. If our Gospel is only for high-class people and not for the poor, then our Christian faith is not incarnated yet. One third of the miracles in the Bible were recorded especially for the poor to read and believe. In rich countries, when people are

sick they do not seek help from God but would seek out a doctor first. The Bible is not written only for the rich or high classes, but also for the poor. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19). Our God is an incarnational God and our Bible is an incarnational Bible.

His name is called "Emmanuel" which means, "God with us". "Now the dwelling of God is with men and he will live with us. We will be his people". Our God is a mission-minded God. He is the word becoming flesh, who made his dwelling among us. "Faith without deeds is dead" (James 2:26). Faith without action is meaningless. Pagans continue searching for their gods, but our God is the spirit who inhabits human form and came searching for us, "For the son of man came to seek and to save what was lost". This is the Incarnation of God. Therefore, to follow God's footpath, each one of us should also become cross-cultural missionary living among the people and not apart from them.

"If anything is needed in modern mission, it is a willingness to be flexible, to have the gift of time to take opportunities to cultivate friendships. It takes time to know the people and to learn the culture well. It takes time to do the extra things that build bonds of love and respect between the missionary and the people"

(Gilliland 1983:286).

Incarnational ministry also includes the fact that the local church needs to be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. Often the compound missionaries exercise too much control over the local church. The church and the Christians are required to lose their own culture and language and to totally copy the lifestyle and rituals of the overseas missionaries.

When I arrived in Liberia in 1983, we ended up buying unnecessary things. This was due to a lack of information. Today the support money of the Chinese missionaries is more than sufficient, but there still is a lack of information. More information means less problems, less information means more problems. The secret of the Apostle Paul's successful mission was his understanding heart. He was involved in two cultures - Jewish and Roman. He experienced them personally and understood them deeply. Even the ministry of Jesus on earth was for only three and half years, but He spent 30 years with the people. He understood their culture, language, custom and way of thinking. All this helped His ministry, during the three years. All that He said was able to meet people's needs and touch people's hearts, none of His words fell to the ground.

If Chinese churches want to minister to all nations, then it is necessary to set up a mission training centre, an information centre on world mission, a world mission library, magazines of all mission organisations, slides, videos, missionaries prayer letters and testimonies. We also need to provide all this information to all the churches, in order to promote the mission vision. Why

was the growth of the Korean church so fast and strong? When the missionaries went to Korea in the early days they made disciples and simultaneously imparted a mission vision to them.

5.2.2 A Spiritual Strategy in a Spiritual World

Part of the incarnational ministry in Africa involves the understanding of the spiritual realities that form part of the people's belief system and their existence. That is why we will have to give attention to these worldviews. In response to that, a Spiritual Strategy will have to be developed that will take these realities seriously.

5.2.2.1 Introduction

Theologically and experientially, we were typical Evangelicals when we embarked on our mission in Liberia. As missionaries we were well prepared in theological, cultural and linguistic studies. However, we were totally unprepared to deal with the one area Liberians considered most important – their relationships with the spirit world. Time after time Liberians would turn our discussions to the disruption in their lives they claimed were caused by evil spirits. Such things as disease, accidents, death, the infertility of humans, animals and fields, drought and the disruption of relationships were all seen as the work of these evil entities.

Although the Gbandi church leaders decided that a primary strategy would be to focus on God's conquest of the spirits through Christ, I was in no position to

assist them. I tried to believe in the reality of evil spirits, but I was ignorant in this area. I was, the Gbandi people told me, more open than my missionary colleagues to accept the reality of the spirit world and appreciate its importance in their lives. Nevertheless, neither my missiology nor my biblical and theological training had provided me with any constructive approaches to meet their needs.

The power of God to heal and deliver from demons was a frequent theme of the Gbandi leaders in their preaching. But we never demonstrated what we claimed in this area. So those we sought to reach were not very impressed with that part of our message. There seemed to be more visible power in their old ways than in Christianity. As missionaries we had brought an essentially powerless message to a very power-conscious people.

In spite of this deficiency, many Gbandi people still found good reasons for becoming Christians and the churches grew. Many found their new relationship to Jesus fulfilling and rejoiced in His acceptance, forgiveness and love. But they learned not to expect power – except in the material realm where we had brought Western or Chinese medicine, schools and even a Chinese approach to Christianity.

The Gbandi people realised intuitively that this Christianity was not able to deal with such things as tragedy, infertility, relational breakdowns and troublesome weather. It did not meet many of their deepest spiritual needs. Even though this was puzzling to them given the fact that Christian leaders talked about the power of Christ, they developing a kind of dual allegiance - a loyalty to

Christianity to handle certain needs, but at the same time continuing their loyalty to traditional religious practitioners to handle their power needs. As missionaries we despised this practice, but we had no effective antidote.

Though we talked a great deal about spiritual things, the Gbandi people understood most aspects of spirituality much better than we did. I am afraid we were doing what Paul accused the Galatians of doing: starting in the Spirit, but then turning to human power (Galatians 3:3). In the name of Christ we had simply reproduced Western secularised approaches to illness, accident, education, fertility, agriculture etc. We acted as though Western scientific methods were more effective than prayer.

We did pray, of course, calmly for ordinary things and fervently when things got really bad. But Western secular techniques were our first choice, God was our last resort. Without meaning to, we taught our African converts that the Christian God works only through Western cultural ways though they soon learned that our methods could not handle many of their needs. We claimed that we were working in the name and power of God, that it was because of his blessing that these techniques were successful. But by observing Western doctors, agriculturists and teachers, who were not Christians, they discovered that there seemed to be little difference in the results of what was done by Christians and what was done by non-Christians. This was an important difference in approach, but the power seemed to be in the techniques and not in the God whom we talked about. The God of power portrayed in the scriptures seemed to be invisible.

This is not to belittle the transforming power of God's love. In fact, once the village medicine man became so impressed with the love of the Christians that he began to attend church. His wife had died and a group of the local Christians joined him and his family in mourning her loss. They had so identified with him in his sorrow that he decided to investigate Christianity. After a few weeks of church attendance however he no longer came. Though I cannot be sure of his reasons for dropping out, my suspicion is that though he heard in the sermons about an amazing miracle worker who once lived and manifested great power, the local Christians had none of that power

themselves. As a matter of fact, these Christians – along with everyone else – came to him (not to the pastor) when they needed healing (often after they had tried the medicine recommended by the Christian leaders and found little or no relief from it). Though the love of Christians was impressive, his primary interest was in spiritual power. And if there was no greater power among the Christians than what he already possessed, then why join them?

5.2.2.2 Spiritual View of Western and Gbandi People

“We have seen that Western peoples pay great attention to the natural world and little if any attention to the spirit world. In many non-western societies the proportions seem to be reversed. Biblical societies were much more like contemporary non-western peoples than like Western societies in this regard” (Kraft 1989:198).

In the following chart Kraft indicates "that biblical societies and approximately two-thirds of today's societies give about the same amount of attention to each of the three areas of causality, while Western peoples give much less attention to the spirit sphere and much more attention to the nature sphere than either of the other sets of societies" (1989:198).

Biblical Societies	2/3 World Societies	Western Societies
Spirit Sphere (God the primary focus. Spirits a lesser focus)	Spirit Sphere (Spirits the primary focus. God a lesser focus)	Spirit/God Sphere Human Sphere
Human Sphere	Human Sphere	
Nature Sphere	Nature Sphere	Nature Sphere

(Kraft 1989:199)

He draws two interesting conclusions:

- The absence of a sense of spirit beings and powers, including God, impoverishes the Western worldview. It is difficult for them to understand either the Bible or the concerns of non-Western peoples in this area.
- It is usually easier for non-western peoples both to understand and to receive God's message directly from the biblical accounts than from Westerners. The Bible is more on their wavelength than we are for

Westerners.

However, there is one major difference between the understanding of biblical peoples and that of contemporary non-Westerners with respect to the spirit realm. In the Bible the focus is on God, while non-western cultures focus much more on spirits than on God. This fact points to an important area needing change for many non-westerners that turn to Christ. This is however often less of a problem than that caused by a secularised presentation of the gospel by Westerners to people who are much more aware of spiritual reality than their Western missionaries (Kraft 1989:199).

What is general in the experience of non-Westerners is that spiritual power is often conveyed through material objects. It was also the case in the biblical worldview. The use of oil that has been blessed (Jas 5:14), healing through the use of personal objects like Paul's handkerchiefs (Acts 19:12) and Jesus' garment (Mt 9:20) are cases in point. Contemporary experience among Christians even opens up the possibility that demons can inhabit objects and buildings. It even seems possible that certain demons have dominion over geographical areas. To minister effectively in those areas therefore the power of the evil spirit will have to be broken.

5.2.2.3 Western and Hebrew Paradigms

I again copy a chart from Kraft that contrasts certain Western and Hebrew worldview paradigms. He accepts "that all of the scriptural authors, except for possibly Luke, were thinking in terms of Hebrew assumptions as they wrote

what God revealed to them. Jesus also was taught Hebrew assumptions as he grew up” (Kraft 1989:202). It is important to “distinguish between Jesus’ kingdom paradigms, which are normative for us, and those of the Hebrews, which are not. If we are to effectively disentangle those paradigms from their Hebrew cultural context, we need to understand the differences between the two” (Kraft 1989:203).

This is quite a problem for Westerners, says Kraft, but less so for millions whose native paradigms are closer to the Hebrew worldview. “Interestingly enough, this fact makes it easier for missionaries to lead such people directly from their native paradigms into those of Scripture than to lead them first into Western understandings” (Kraft 1989:203).

I will look at some of these paradigms or perspectives and compare them with Western ones.

Western Paradigms	Hebrew Paradigms
1. Categorisation, Classification, Logic	
a) Life is analysed in neat categories.	a) Everything blurs into everything else.
b) Natural and supernatural dichotomy.	b) The supernatural affects everything.
c) Clear difference between human, animal and plant life.	c) The supernatural affects everything.
d) Linear logic.	d) Contextual logic.
2. Person/Group	
a) Individualism. Group interests usually	a) The group is the reality. Individual



subservient to individual concerns. Individuals of almost any age or status make important decisions.	interests are usually subservient to group concerns. Important decisions are made as a group.
b) Equality of persons.	b) Different persons are of different value, according to their status in the hierarchy.
c) Oriented toward freedom. Society is to provide as much freedom as possible for individuals.	c) Oriented toward security. Society is to provide as much security as possible for individuals.
d) Competition is good (need to "get ahead").	d) Competition is evil (need to "work together").
e) The majority rules in a democracy.	e) Certain people are "born to rule".
f) Human-centred universe.	f) God and tribe/family-centred universe.
g) Money and material possession are the measure of human value.	g) Family relationships are the measure of human value.
h) Biological life is sacred.	h) Social life is supremely important.
3. Cause, Power	
a) Faith in "chance". Cause and effect relationships are key and limit what can happen.	a) God causes everything.
b) Humans are in charge of nature through science.	b) God is in charge of everything.
c) Scientific strategy and technique will give humans total power over all things.	c) Strategy and technique in the spiritual realm is the source of whatever control we may achieve. Learning control via spiritual techniques is crucial.



d) Power over others achieved via business, politics and other organisations.	d) Power over others structured by social patterns ordained by God.
4. Time/Event	
a) Linear time is divided into neat segments. Each event in life is a new one.	a) Cyclical / spiralling time. Very similar events constantly recurring.
b) Oriented toward the near future.	b) Oriented toward the past
c) "Time orientation." Events are scheduled according to the clock and calendar. We arrive at appointments at pre-arranged time.	c) "Event orientation." Quality (not time) of event is crucial. The event starts when the proper people are present (not according to time).
d) History is an attempt to record "facts" from past objectively.	d) History attempts to preserve significant truths in a way meaningful today, whether or not all details are objective facts.
c) Change is good. It is called "progress."	Change is bad. It means destruction of traditions.
5. Space, the Material Sphere	
a) The universe evolved by chance.	a) God created the universe.
b) The universe can be dominated and controlled via science and technology.	b) The universe is to be responsibly managed by us as stewards of God.
c) The universe is like a machine.	c) The universe is more personal.
d) Material goods are a measure of personal achievement.	d) Material goods are a measure of God's blessing.

(Kraft 1989:205)

5.2.2.4 A Spiritual Strategy of Healing

The Gbandi church has grown and developed through the healing ministry. Faith begins when a human being encounters God. In this dimension we may interpret the factors that have made possible the growth of the Gbandi church. I will endeavour to illustrate those influences. All of them are related to divine healing.

Disease is an unwelcome visitor to humankind and a most serious problem in our lives. So without exception, wherever religion is known, healing is on the agenda. In order to solve the problem of disease, humans try to clarify the causes of disease. We may say that disease is the result of sin (Deuteronomy 28:20-22). The diseases of mankind is basically the disharmony caused by sin. That is to say that in the state of sinlessness there was a beautiful harmony between God and man, between man and man, man and nature, but with the intrusion of sin, this harmony was destroyed and mankind lost its balance. The destructive factors, which cause imbalance and disharmony, include within themselves the seed of death. Seen from this perspective, the forgiveness of sins is the divine healing by that diseases are cured. This is also called a prelude to the real resurrection that will be achieved in the time of Jesus' Second Coming.

Missionaries cannot turn their backs upon those who have to live with various diseases. People afflicted by diseases easily lose the meaning of life. Mission means caring for human beings as a whole. Missionaries have the task of curing and healing the weak and troubled through the care for their spirits, minds and bodies.

5.2.2.5 Divine Healing as Part of Spiritual Strategy

It is necessary to develop a **theology of divine healing**. Divine healing cannot remain in the abstract dimension of dogmas. It is an event and an experience, which can be observed in the dimension of the phenomenology of religion. But beyond that, divine healing reveals supernatural factors, which cannot be explained rationally.

Divine healing, as an aspect of practical theology, should be developed theologically and in action: it is God's love, authority and care concretely manifested. God is a healing God. He heals those who are suffering from illness and raises the dead. Human beings can participate in God's power of life and creation through true divine healing. The core of the work of divine healing is that it is a work of salvation. If death, curse and diseases entered into the human world because of the sin of Adam, then divine healing is clearly an assurance of the forgiveness of sins (Kim, 1987:14).

Divine healing becomes a sign of that salvation which will find its realisation with the final coming of the Kingdom of God when believers receive their resurrection bodies. Divine healing is a sign of the resurrection. Divine healing holds a religious meaning for those who have lost their hope because of incurable disease. So the healing of diseases is not a minor detail. Renewed hope, consolation and salvation is theirs through divine healing.

To summarise the positive aspects of divine healing, (Cho 1993:59) mentions the following.

- Firstly, the negation of the biblical miracles is a logical contradiction because it tries to negate the witness of the disciples and to maintain only their lessons.
- Second, the forgiveness of sins should include the healing of diseases because disease entered life through the corruption of mankind.
- The third is that, if God is believed to be omnipotent, then healing is to be accepted as a part of God's power.
- The fourth is that the existential experiences of the believers bear witness to the miracles of divine healing. Therefore, these miracles should be understood in the perspective of religion and faith, not in the perspective of science. Moreover, they must be recognised as a part of faith (Cho 1993: 59). The miracles of Jesus bore witness to His divinity. Jesus started his divine healing not motivated by the desire for the praise and honour of others, but by His love, which participates in the suffering of the diseased. The miracles of Jesus also gave meaning to the revelation of God's authority and God's aim of salvation. The miracles of Jesus demonstrated his wonderful love.

The Spiritual Strategy has an evangelical aim. There is an inseparable relationship between the mission ministry and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Among the gifts of the Holy Spirit there is also that of divine healing. It has the potential to assure people of their salvation. It helps them to remain standing in faith and to accept the Word of God (Osborn 1977:310). The gift of divine healing is very important and is an essential way of manifesting divine power.

There are many Gbandi people who come to church in order to be cured of their diseases. There are also missionaries giving testimony of healing from incurable diseases, something which led them to dedicate their lives to evangelisation.

Divine healing seems to be a necessary gift for missionaries in situations like that experienced in Liberia. If missionaries adapt and strengthen this gift and place more emphasis upon it, then divine healing will play an important role in bringing salvation and growth to their churches. Divine healing is a gift that can be performed through faith and the grace of God by the laying on of hands. Andrew Murray said: "Oh, may the Lord raise up in His Church many of these righteous men, animated with living faith, whom He can use to glorify Jesus as the divine Healer of the sick" (Witty 1989:191-192).

The gospel of divine healing should be intensely emphasised and preached. Divine healing makes people experience the power of God and renews the meaning of their lives. They become better family people and develop more eagerness for church life. Through this research I have learned that divine healing has contributed to church growth and the development of the Gbandi church. It seems as if the influence of divine healing is a desperately needed factor in the modern mission ministry in the non-western world.

5.3 CELL GROUPS AND THEIR LEADERS

5.3.1 Introduction

It may be helpful to shortly relate the story of the well-known church pastored by Dr Paul Yonggi Cho in Seoul, Korea. It is the story of the struggle from a One-leader-church into a Multi-leaders church through the Home Cell Strategy of how this Pastor of the biggest church in the world repented and changed to a Home Cell Strategy.

In 1961 Dr Cho decided to build the largest church in Korea. At that time he thought he was doing it for God, but he realised later that he was actually doing it out of his own personal ambition.

The first year he asked God for 150 members, and he got 150 members. The second year he asked God to double the membership and he got 300 members. The third year he again asked Him to double the membership and by the end of that year they had 600 members. If he could get 600 members in only three years he reasoned, why could he not build the largest church in the city?

In those days the Yong Nak Presbyterian Church was the largest church in Seoul. It had about 6 000 members and that proved to be a great challenge to him. In his ambition he said, "I will build a church larger than this and the Lord will fill it". Early in his ministry God showed him the importance of setting goals and having faith in God to provide the growth for which he dreamed. God taught him to pray specifically for his needs. This time he decided to ask the Lord for five times as many members as they had and to grant this within three years. That would give their church 3 000 members by 1964.

As he prayed, he received confirmation that through him, indeed, God would build a church larger than the Yong Nak Presbyterian Church, he was excited! He did not wait for any further revelation on how the Lord wanted him to accomplish this. He simply began to work all the harder to bring in new members. He thought God approved of what he was doing. After all, God was blessing their work with miracles and healing and that was what brought the people to the church. But he was convinced that God had made Reverend Cho somebody special. God was doing all this work through him! Without him, nothing happened in the church. He was the pastor, the administrator, he was in charge of the Sunday school programme and oftentimes he was even the janitor. Full Gospel Central Church simply could not function without the Reverend Cho, he thought. He was the pivot around which the whole church revolved.

By 1964 their congregation had grown to 2 400, but he was already in trouble. He still thought he was really accomplishing great things for the Lord, rushing around from early morning until late in the evening, but his nerves were beginning to wear out. He suffered from constant fatigue, yet he continued to force himself to keep the church moving. He preached, he counselled, he visited the sick, he knocked on doors – he was always on the move. However, the day came when he broke down. He thought he was dying. That was the day when the Lord convinced him that he was not meant to do everything himself.

5.3.2 The Spiritual Strategy of the Missionary is to Train Local Church Leaders in Team Work

5.3.2.1 Teamwork

“With the appointment of elders the churches were complete. They were fully equipped. They very soon became familiar with all the orders of ministry both permanent and charismatic” (Allen 1986: 111). Serving the Lord can be likened to a spiritual warfare. And in any battle it is clear that it cannot be won without a great measure of teamwork.

“St Paul was not content with ordaining one elder for each church. In every place he ordained several. This ensured that all authority should not be concentrated in the hands of one man. It ensured the possibility of frequent administrations of the Sacraments. Responsibility was divided and many were enlisted in the service of the church. Thus the whole body grew together. As the general knowledge increased, the older men died and younger men, who had grown up with the new generation and shared their education and experience, gradually took their place and became the natural and the ordained successors of their fathers” (Allen 1986:104).

5.3.2.2 Cell Groups

- **The need for cell groups**

We live in a world that is characterised by individualism and isolation. The

breakdown of natural networks of supportive relationships in communities such as neighbourhoods, families and even the workplace, is producing individuals that are independent but lonely and isolated. Because of this, people look like they have it "all together" on the outside, when in reality they are hurting and in need of healthy, supportive relationships, but which not the norm in this world. As the earth's population increases, it also implodes. By the end of the century, one half of all humanity will live in urban areas. Our rural concept of church life must be abandoned (Neighbour 1990:15).

Cell groups provide a vehicle for life-giving relationships to be developed. In a cell group people develop committed and trusting relationships with each other and the Lord as they share their lives and minister to one another's needs. There is no better environment into which new believers can be disciplined than an accepting, living circle of believers in a cell group.

- **What is a cell group?**

A cell group is a regular gathering of 5 to 12 believers in a home or some neutral location for the purpose of mutual spiritual edification and evangelism. It follows the Biblical pattern of the New Testament Church where, according to Acts 2:46, they met "in the temple...and from house to house". This means the early church was successful in building close relationships and winning souls to Jesus Christ.

- **What is the purpose of a cell group?**

The church's primary goal is to unite people together with God. Being in relationship with fellow believers is not optional for the Christian. The New

Testament provides us with theological reasons for the place of cell groups in the church.

Firstly, cell groups are essential because of the quality of life we are called to live. Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another". To truly love one another, it is necessary to get to know each other on a deeper level than the congregational gathering will allow. To develop this quality of life together, heart-to-heart relationships are needed.

Secondly, the essential nature of spiritual growth is to become transformed into His image. Spiritual growth (or character development) is best learned through association with other Christians, who – in a loving supportive atmosphere – study the Word of God and help each other to live it out.

Thirdly, cells are important because we are not saved in an isolated and individualistic fashion but are saved and called to live our Christian life in community. We are called into a special relationship with each other with privileges and responsibilities (Galatians 6:10, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Colossians 3:12-17).

Further, cells are necessary to equip Christians for their various kinds of witness and service. Each Christian has a gift(s), from God and is called to exercise it for the common good (Hebrew 10:24, 1 Corinthians 12-14). Cell groups provide situations in which this mutuality of ministry can be shared and developed.

Finally, the role of all ministries in the Church must be evaluated by measuring their goals in light of the church's overall objective that constitutes disciplined believers, equipping the saints and winning the world for Christ. God is raising up the church to be an army of disciples of Jesus who will affect this generation for Him through worship of God, witness to the world and a caring ministry. The implementation of our purpose in the life of the believer is extremely difficult to accomplish where our lifestyles and schedules keep us largely separated from each other. The principle aim of cell groups is to provide the vehicle where these biblical purposes can be lived out.

The cell group is the vehicle that will enable us to be the church God intends for us to be. In no other way can the functions of the church be so fully carried out. In no other context can the Word of God be communicated with so much impact on lives. The church today, as the church of the New Testament, needs the "church in the house", which can be realised in cell groups.

5.3.2.3 Cell Group Leadership

"In the early days of the church there were 3 000 or 5 000 people became Christians every day in Jerusalem. Who could have taken care of all those people, since there were only twelve apostles? How could they take care of the "house-to-house" ministry? There had to be leaders of smaller groups of house fellowships" (Cho 1981:17).

The primary task of the cell group leader is to model Christian discipleship. Paul lists the required characteristics for leadership in his writings. All these characteristics, except for the gift of being a good teacher, are also expected of every Christian. They are essentially the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

- Being a mature Christian with a serious commitment to Christ. The fruit of the Spirit should be evident in one's life.
- Having a good reputation and be faithful and reliable so that others can follow with confidence.
- Being a good teacher. For group life this will be an ability to enable people to discover God's Word.
- Should teach a sound doctrine and must know and continue to study theology.
- Being a servant, willing to care for, be available to and serve the group members.
- Is not only using one's spiritual gifts but also train the group members how to receive the spiritual gifts (Neighbour 1995:95).

Cell groups thus provide a real opportunity for people such as these to find meaningful involvement in the life of their church (Cho 1981:50). It is however very important that those who would wish to be cell group leaders will

be willing to submit themselves to the leadership of the church on matters of qualification for leadership and overall direction of their group.

Leadership implies that one person is influencing other members of the group. As a group matures, the whole group will share the leadership. However, as the designated leader of a group, there are certain functions that the leader should be doing to enable the group to be healthy.

5.3.2.4 Training Cell Group Leaders

“The theme of discipleship is central to Matthew’s gospel and to Matthew’s understanding of the church and mission. “The disciples’ is the specifically ecclesiological concept of the evangelist” (Bornkamm in Bosch 1991:73).

It is clear that this leadership needs training but that the training should be in-service. The key to this is the ministry of the pastors. In practice very few of the pastors are themselves trained. The chairman of the pastor’s fraternal said: “In the Indian area of Lenasia about 70% of the church pastors have never been to a Bible College” (Interview Johnny Challen 2000 Sep). How can they train others while their own quiver is empty?

Today in the Indian churches, most of the Christians do not want to study the Bible. The main reason being that their pastor does not want to study either. If you spend all your time on visitations every day, then after ten years one will still be doing visitations. If you spend all your time counseling every day, then

after ten years you will still be counseling. But if you study, then you will be changed. You will cause change in your church, your committee and even change in the world. So, it is necessary to go to a Bible College and spend more time studying the Bible because a good leader is a good reader and a better reader is a better leader. It is a priority therefore to work towards motivating these pastors to undergo theological education and training. This is not always easy because they often lack the time, money and background for formal training. However, attention should be given to this (Research from Pastor Fraternal and Chairman 1999).

Hinduism does not encourage studying, people merely follow the priest and religious books are not used. They are based on fixed rituals, which exclude book references. Consequently, when Hindus convert to Christianity, they continue this approach. Pastors do not only dislike studying, but they are intimidated by the idea. And if they do not study, how are they going to feed the lambs and sheep and care for them? If God does not nourish them, how can they nourish others? (Based on research by SIM Grace Chiang, 2000)

“You lay too much stress on the sacraments and you ignore the ministry of teaching; you say that communicants untrained in theological colleges could be ordained pastors, and celebrate the Holy Communion, and lead the local church; but you ignore the necessity of teaching. Untrained pastors could not teach” (Allen 1962:174,176).

He suggest that the Bible itself is a book of teaching for the church, and might be read as such, not in snippets, but in large complete passages.

5.3.2.5 Indigenous Church and Theology

Roland Allen became the 'apostle of the Holy Spirit', speaking a great deal about the 'spontaneous expansion of the church'. He took every seriously the affirmation that the Spirit 'will lead you into all truth' (John 16:13). The Holy spirit, residing in the body of believers, should and could be trusted to lead the church to maturity. Allen's views may be regarded as the origin of the charismatic ideal in the church. Whereas Allen's ideal could be coined 'the charismatic church'. Those who came later, especially Hodges, described this as the 'indigenous church' (Kritzinger, Meiring, Saayman 1994:150).

Another aspect of the formation of local leaders is the development of an indigenous theology. Christianity has been unfairly stereotyped as a "White man's religion". But this makes it difficult for Chinese and African people to accept Christianity into their culture. Why does this not happen with other religions e.g. Hinduism? Why is it difficult for Western Christianity to become a part of non-Western culture?

The Jews expected the gentiles to be circumcised and to follow the Jews, become like Jews, before they could be saved. Europeans asked of other people to follow their worship rituals and become like Whites, in order to be saved. The one is as mistaken as the other.

The (black) African Independent Churches are an exciting, dynamic part of the growth of the church in Africa because they are so radically different from

Western churches. This means that African churches need to have their own theology and to explain the Bible in their own way. God uses the same Bible but speaks to different people in different ways, depending on cultures, situations, times and levels of comprehension. The Western way of thinking often does not make sense to the Africans. They need the Bible to speak for itself. Lack of faith leads to distrust.

Roland Allen wrote some very challenging things:

"We have educated our converts to put us in the place of Christ. We believe that it is the Holy Spirit of Christ that inspires and guides us: we cannot believe that the same Spirit will guide and inspire them. We believe that the Holy Spirit has taught us and is teaching us true conceptions of morality, doctrine, ritual: we cannot believe that the same Spirit will teach them" (Allen 1986:144).

and

"Paul never sought to enforce their obedience by decree; he always strove to win their heartfelt approval and their intelligent co-operation. He never did things for them, he always left them to do things for themselves. He set them an example according to the mind of Christ" (Allen 1986:149).

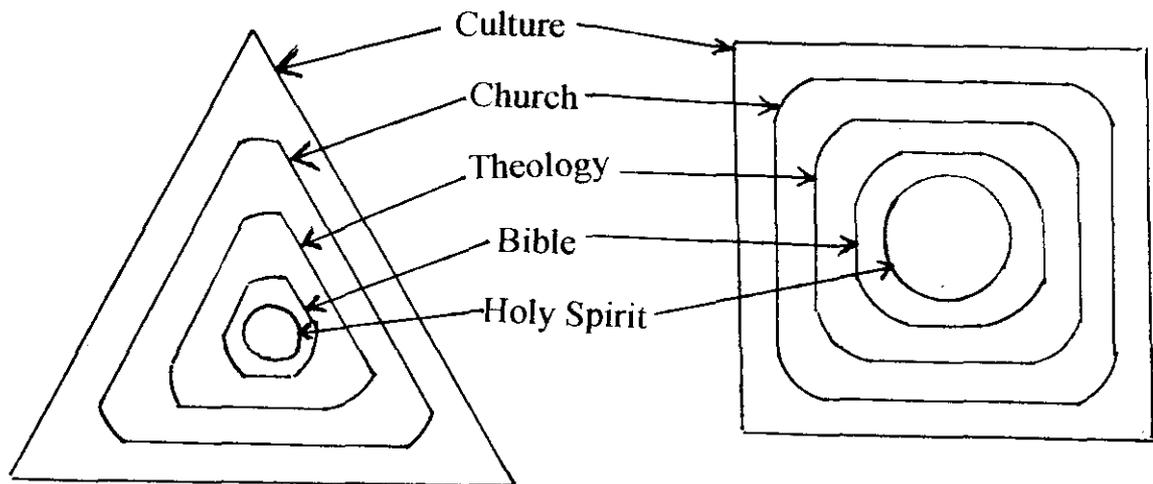
Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat" (Matthew 14:16). Why allow them do it? Because only their own

people understand their own need. They can do much better than outsiders themselves. The best outsiders can do is to give them encouragement.

“What is basic is the missionary’s attitude. Will he hold tightly to the authority and the status that his position as an outsider often carries, or will he consciously and sincerely seek out those gifted people who can learn the art of leadership? It was extremely important to Paul that the churches be fully equipped to carry on their own lives” (Gilliland 1983:216).

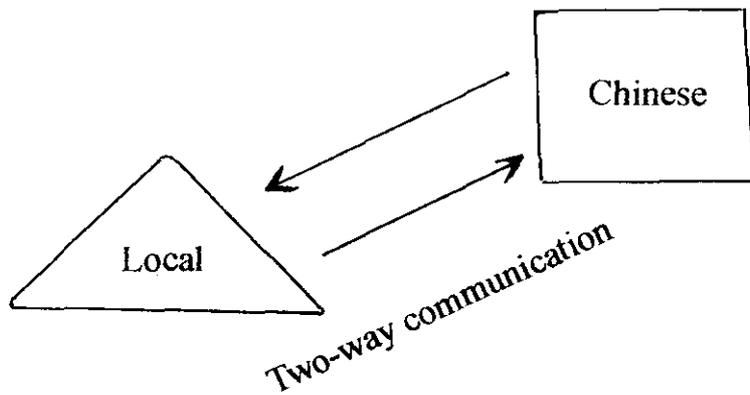
The following diagrammes illustrate this:

[a] The best way is E-1¹³, which is better than E-3

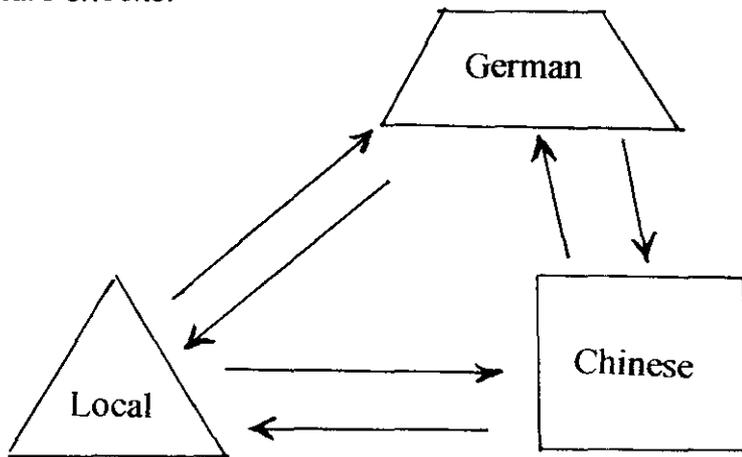


* Adapted from Stephen C. Knapp, "Contextualisation and Its Implications for U. S. Evangelical Churches and Missions" (paper delivered at the Institute of Mennonite Studies, Elkhart, IN), diagramme 2, p. 23.

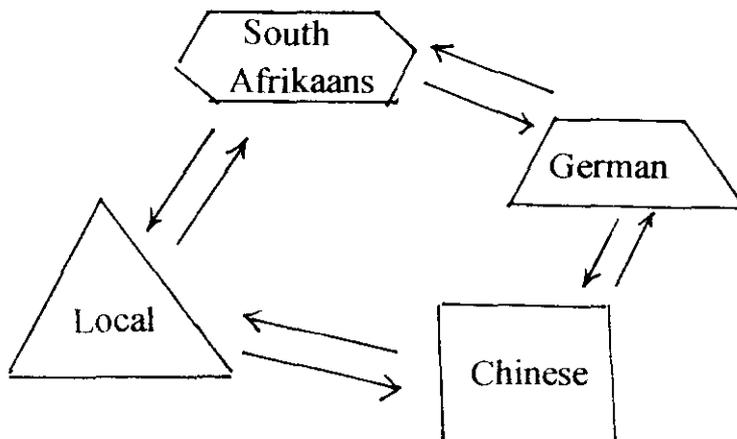
¹³ E-1 means evangelism from same culture and language to the same culture and language.



[b] E-3 to E-I. One missionary was training local church leaders. Two way culture shocks.



[c] E-3 +E-4 to E-1. One missionary with Afrikaans Christian door-to-door to the Muslim. Six times culture shock.



[d] E-3+E-4¹⁴ E-5 to E-1 One missionary with Afrikaans and Chinese Christian door-to-door to the Muslim- 12 times culture shock.

¹⁴ E-4, or E-5 means from different nationality, different culture, language background work together.

Hindus and Muslims see Christians as divided because we have many cultural differences between us. How can we win their heart for Christ? The best way is to train the local church Indian leaders to reach their own people. That will be E-1 communicate with E-1, without any culture, custom or lifestyle shock.

Jesus usually used the local people to do his ministry. He used a Samaritan woman to call her townspeople to come, not His disciples, because the Samaritans are already a different culture from the Jews. He used evangelists within the sub-culture. The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return home and tell how much God has done for you". So the man went away and told the whole town how much Jesus had done for him (Luke 8:38-39).

Jesus used 12 disciples to witness for Him and He also used the local leaders. Jesus' co-workers were local people, not angels. If Jesus used angels this would probably have attracted many people. They would have been very interested in angels, even bowing down before them. This would have been good for the short term, but not good for the long term. They did not incarnate into human culture. Jesus did not use supermen or superwomen to do His work, but He used ordinary people, local leaders.

The apostles chose local leaders to look after the church. "Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them" (Act 6:3).

Paul also used the local people to work in their own area.

"Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband



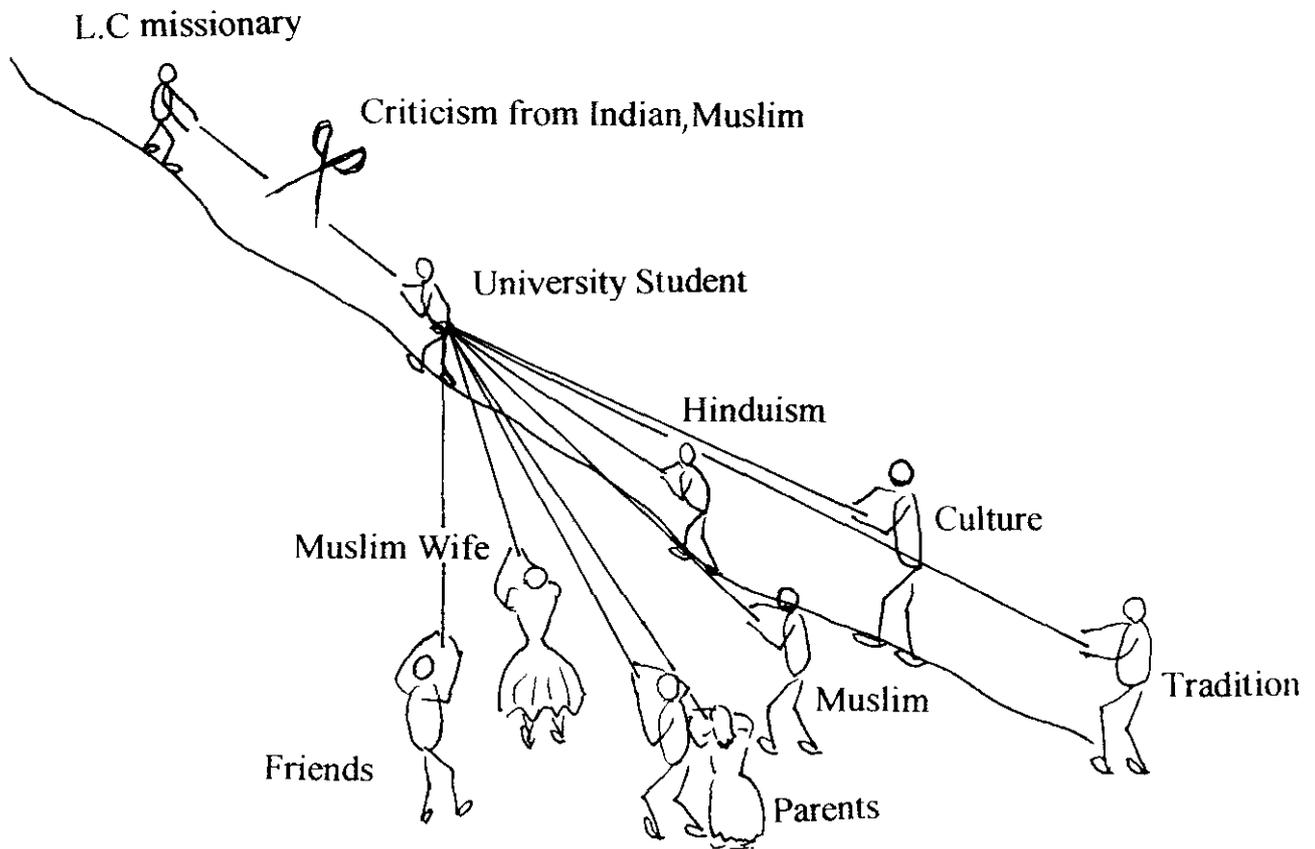
of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap" (1 Timothy 3:2-7).

From the above scripture verses we know that the church leader had to be well known by the sheep and the sheep had to know the shepherd. The newcomer from outside cannot be a good shepherd because he does not know the situation of the sheep. An outside evangelist who comes to preach for a short time will fare well, but on a long-term basis the people need a shepherd who knows the sheep well; this is the local church leader.

Apostle Paul always built up local church elders and deacons to look after their own church (the home-made leader). He never called people from afar to do ministry among an unknown congregation. Paul never brought Corinthian church leaders to work in an Ephesian church, or Galatian church leaders to work in the Philippian church. The reason for this was that the Corinthian church leaders were not missionaries. Their work in their own local church was more effective than putting them into another area. Developing leaders at an early stage emphasises contextual Christianity.

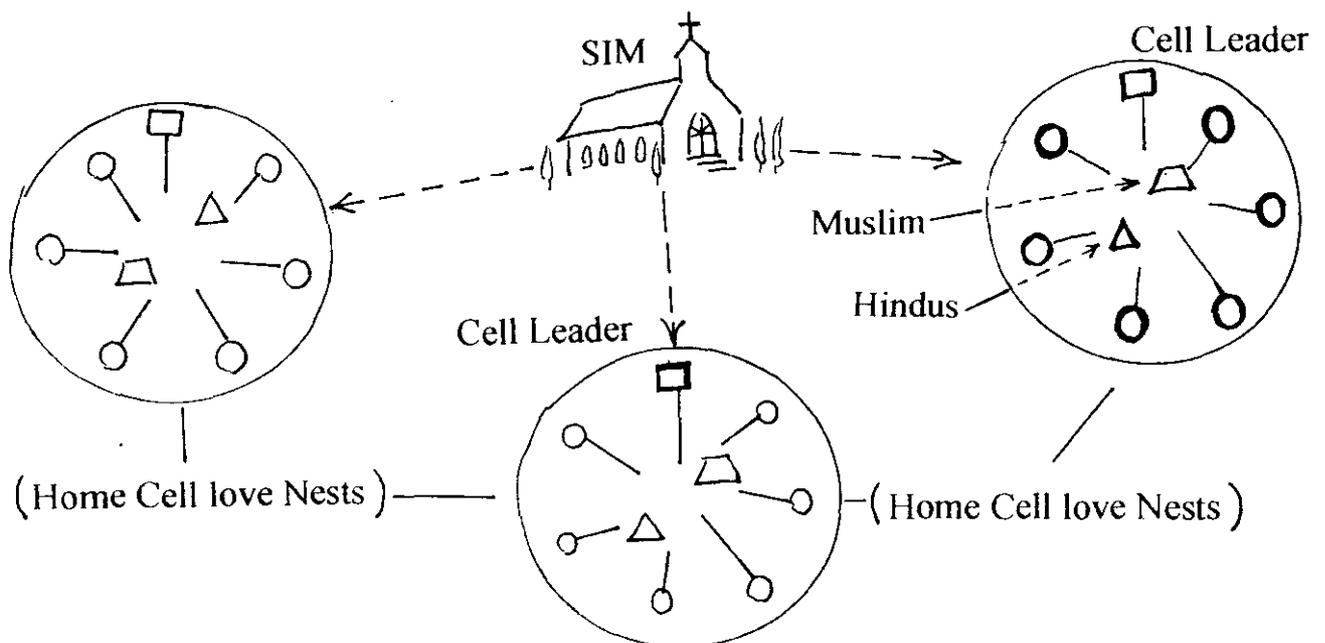
Tippet raises the issue of self-image as the first mark of a truly indigenous church, says Gilliland. This is a church that sees itself as "mediating the work, the mind, the word and the ministry of Christ in its own environment" (Gilliland 1983:250).

Life Challenge started by evangelising the Indian Muslims (E-3). The church leaders, however, were not happy with their strategy. They didn't co-operate. So the project failed.

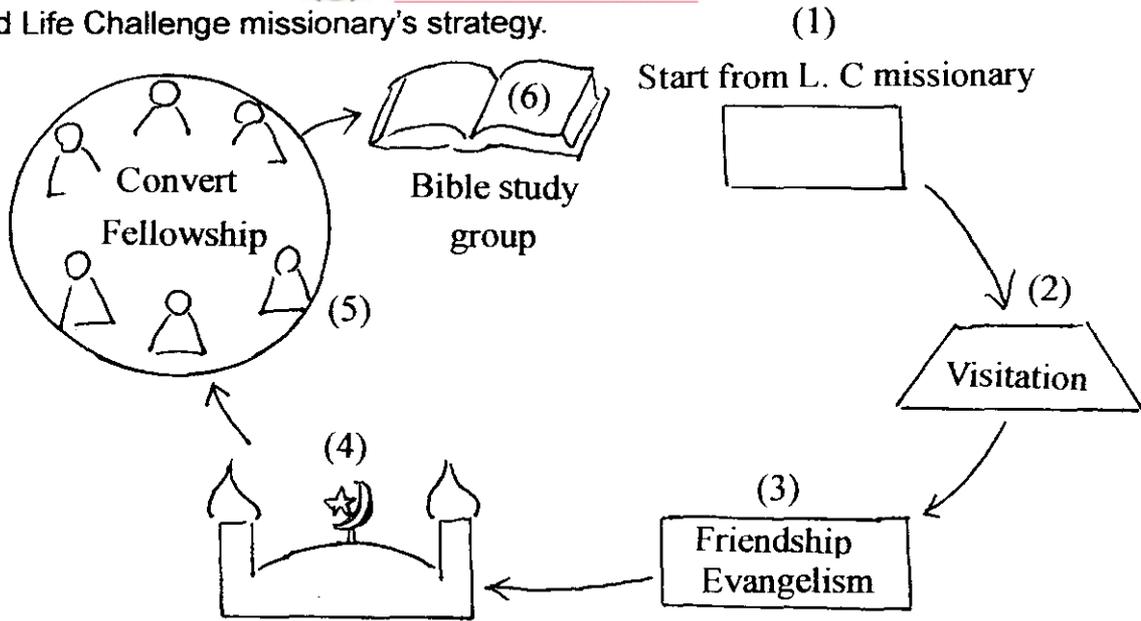


This is where the Life Challenge mission failed. They trained some university students in Muslim outreach and then sent them out two by two to do door-to-door evangelism because they did not want to work with the church pastors. There were no shepherds and the new believers had no shepherds to look after them, just like the delivery of an illegitimate child thrown away on

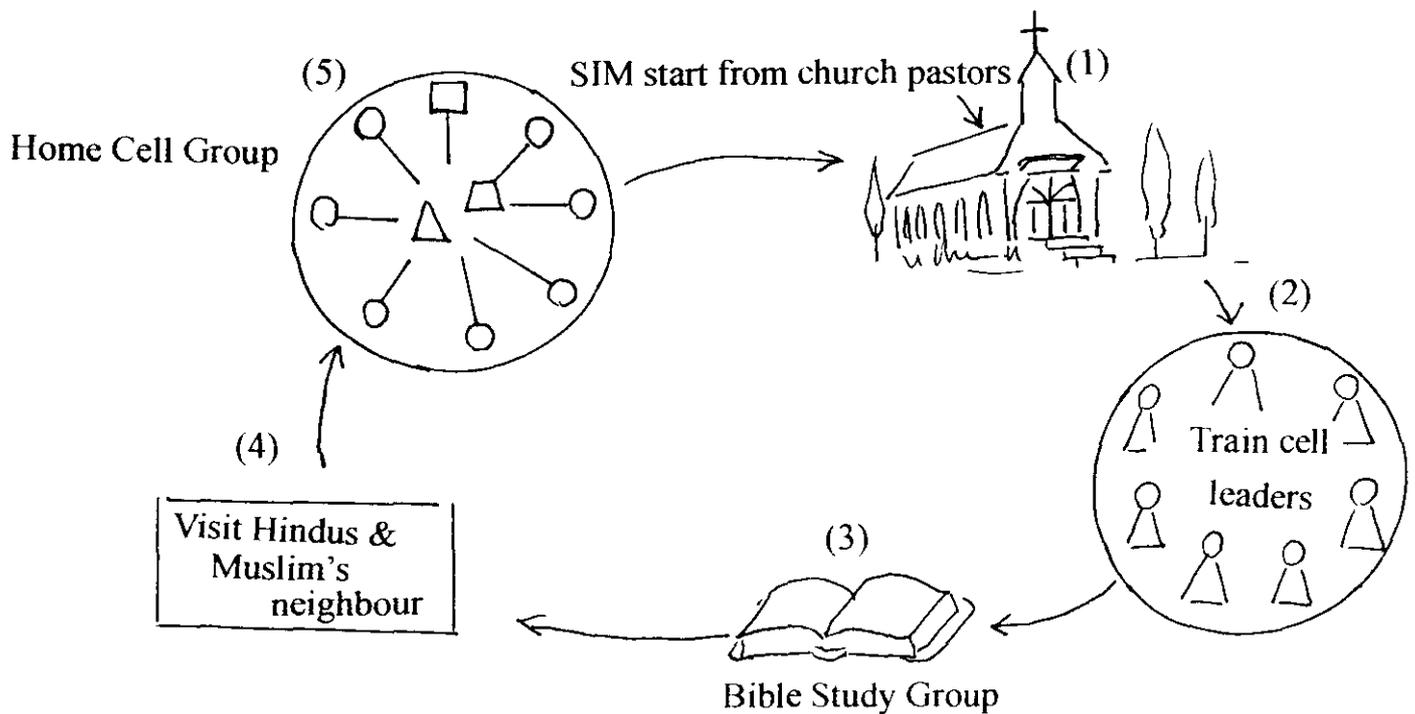
the street, without any family to look after them. "As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path and the birds came and ate it up" (Matthew 13:4). "The house that was cleaned of the demons, but not occupied. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first" (Matthew 12:45). A bird will first make a nest before it lays eggs. The LC door-to-door work delivered the spiritual eggs so to say on the road (parable of the sower) and only then started to make a nest for the eggs. Some times the birds are cleverer than human being. What does this "net" mean? A home cell group can also be called a "Love Net". It is necessary to help the Indian church start home cell training courses and create the "Love Nets" for newly converted Muslims.



Old Life Challenge missionary's strategy.



5.3.2.6 SIM Chiang's Spiritual Strategy



Ownership

The key to a Spiritual Strategy with indigenous leadership is the concept of "Ownership". The Prayer Mountain Ministry in Daxina is a good example. In

1996 Brian Marion and Chiang attended services (06:00-09:00) together every Saturday for the first two years. Some pastors did accompany them, but only a few people were regular at that time. They changed the mountain to one that was nearer to the people of Daxina – the mountain was also easy to climb. Their first meeting happened to be the Easter morning sunrise service and the turnout was 175 people. This sparked the interest of a group of prayer warriors, resulting in a marked growth in the attendance: from 10 to 20 to 30 to 40 to 45, and sometimes 50 people. This Prayer Mountain began in 1998 and grew in popularity because Pastor Russell Abraham announced it to the church and encouraged the congregation to attend. The mountain was referred to as Chiang's Prayer Mountain, but he discouraged this saying "My name should not be used because my departure is imminent and people might no longer be interested in the Prayer Mountain once I left". Instead, the mountain should be called by its name. One faithful prayer warrior, Monty, was then given the leadership of the Prayer Mountain ministry, so Chiang was able to hand over to him. After one year Chiang started another Prayer Mountain in Zak Park, together with Pastor Johnny Moodley. He took leadership of this for the first month in order to set the example for future leadership. In the first Prayer Mountain, he led for three years before handing over to Monty. In the case of the second mountain, he handed over to Pastor Moodley within a period of one month. The Prayer Mountains are still in operation to this day.

Next, he went to Roodepoort to start a mountain. He shared the Prayer Mountain vision with Pastor fraternal prayer meeting, Pastor Dion, who immediately became interested to such an extent that he prayed every single

day on the mountain. He prayed in full view of the people and they developed a high respect for him. Once after descending from the mountain, he knelt on the street to pray. The prayer warriors followed suit and it was a wonderful time that included confession of the sins of the city, with tears, prayers of repentance and also for revival.

It is very important for the local church to take leadership and perceive the mountain in that particular area as belonging to them. This is known as Indigenous Theology because it results in the inhabitants themselves becoming dedicated and taking responsibility for various aspects of the ministry. Indigenous theology is very important in order for the people to have a sense of ownership and this is Chiang's strategy. Previously, Life Challenge Ministries worked 15 years in Lenasia but they were unable to establish any roots. The main reason for this is that the strategy is always that of western missionaries, who retained their leadership, instead of handing it over to the local people. Consequently, when their time there was over, so was their ministry. At their departure, the ministry they ran shut down immediately. The better strategy is to make the people experience a sense of ownership and responsibility for the Lord's work, so it will not die down when a pastor leaves – this is Indigenous Theology, making the ministry personally relevant to the people. When Chiang left the various prayer mountains, he was careful to completely relinquish control to the new leaders. He allowed the local people the option of doing things their way. Indian people know their needs better than he does, for example, they might prefer to pray more, or they might want to spend more time sharing God's Word, or place the focus on sharing testimonies. Even though he tried to model by example for the first three

years, at the first prayer mountain, he allowed the people the liberty of exercising their own control, while encouraging them to maintain a healthy balance between time spent in prayer and time spent expounding God's Word. He also ensured that leadership was always handed to a person of integrity who would be faithful in biblical teaching in the Prayer Mountain ministry - either a pastor or Bible College student.

The second example is the promotion of the March for Jesus. Chiang consulted all the pastors in making a decision to allow the youth to handle the March for Jesus because it is “the old men who dream dreams, the young people who see visions and the children who prophesy” (Acts 2:17). Old men are the thinkers (like the philosophers); young men are the doers (the activists). The young people have more energy to co-ordinate the March For Jesus and since the pastors are too busy to get largely involved, the ideal would be to leave the march to the young people. They have many capabilities and did extremely well in planning the strategies for and co-ordination of, the March for Jesus. Most of the youth of all the surrounding churches were involved in this march.

5.4 THE PRAYER STRATEGY

5.4.1 Personal Prayer Life



5.4.1.1 Introduction

The Bible is a Book full of powerful prayers.

- Moses was a powerful person. He could speak with authority not only to the enemies of God, but also to God's people. Where did his power come from? Moses developed a life of prayer. When he prayed, plagues came upon Egypt and the Red Sea opened before Israel.
- Joshua saw the mighty hand of God work through his life and ministry. He knew the will and strategy of God in battle. Mighty cities fell before the untrained army that he led. Joshua developed so much power because he had learned to pray. While Moses was praying in the mountain, Joshua spent the night at the foot of the mountain in prayer. When Moses departed, God had a trained leader who was familiar with prayer.
- David was a man given to prayer. When he was anointed the king of Israel, Saul was still on the throne. David could have been discouraged by this fact, yet prayer brought him to a place of trust. He waited for the Lord to place him on Israel's physical throne. David was strong enough in his relationship with the Lord that he did not kill Saul when he had the opportunity. After Saul's death, David's first action as the recognised king of Israel was to bring back the Ark of the Covenant to its rightful place at the centre of Israel's worship. The source of his power was a life of prayer.

- Elijah was the prophet of God during one of the worst times in the history of Israel. At that time, Israel had turned to the worship of Baal. Elijah prayed powerfully, challenging the prophets of Baal. Elijah was a man of prayer. He would spend hours and even days in prayer. This is why when Elijah was taken up in the whirlwind by the chariot of fire, the sons of the prophets looked for him on the mountaintops of Israel.

- However, no one has ever manifested the power of God like the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Before He entered His public ministry, He spent time with the Father in prayer. Jesus was known to have spent seasons of prayer with the Father alone. This was the source of His power. He could do nothing unless the Father revealed it to Him.

5.4.1.2 The Importance of Prayer

- **Prayer life is more important than strategy and method**

“We are constantly on a stretch, if not on a strain, to devise new methods, new plans and new organisations to advance the Church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the gospel. This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man or sink the man in the plan or organisation. God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God's method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men” (Bounds

1996:9).

Many of the Indian churches in Lenasia think that if they have loudspeakers and a big amplifier, then their church will grow. Some think if they have “Praise and worship” or regular cell groups they will grow.

“What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use – men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men - men of prayer” (Bounds 1996:10).

- **Prayer life is more important than talent**

Two more quotes from EM Bounds:

“The sermon grows because the man grows. The sermon is forceful because the man is forceful. The sermon is holy because the man is holy. The sermon is full of the divine unction because the man is full of the divine unction” (Bounds 1996:11).

and

“It is not great talents nor great learning nor great preachers that God needs, but men great in holiness, great in faith, great in love, great in fidelity, great for God-men always preaching by holy sermons in the pulpit,

by holy lives out of it. These can mould a generation for God" (Bounds 1996:14).

- **Ministry without prayer is in vain**

A man without prayer is not working for God but working for man only. He is no longer God's man, but a man of affairs, of the people. He prays not because his mission is to the people. If he can move the people, create an interest, a sensation in favour of religion, an interest in Church work, then he is satisfied. His personal relationship to God is no factor in his work, and prayer has little or no place in his plans.

"It is impossible for the preacher to keep his spirit in harmony with the divine nature of his high calling without much prayer. That the preacher by dint of duty and laborious fidelity to the work and routine of the ministry can keep himself in trim and fitness is a serious mistake. Even sermon making incessant and taxing as an art, as a duty, as a work, or as a pleasure, will engross and harden, will estrange the heart, by neglect of prayer, from God. The scientist loses God in nature. The preacher may lose God in his sermon" (Bounds 1996:34).

- **Spiritual Warfare is not easy but the price must be paid**

“Praying is spiritual work: and human nature does not like taxing spiritual work.

Human nature wants to sail to heaven under a favouring breeze, a full smooth sea” (Bounds 1996:44).

- **Better praying causes better serving**

The preacher must be pre-eminently a man of prayer. His heart must graduate in the school of prayer. In the school of prayer only can the heart learn to preach. No learning can make up for the failure to pray. No earnestness, no diligence, no study, no gifts will supply its lack. As Bounds say:

“Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still. He will never talk well and with real success to men for God who has not learned well how to talk to God for men” (Bounds 1996:37).

5.4.1.3 When and How?

History abounds with examples of great men who devoted the early hours of each day to prayer. Wesley spent two hours daily in prayer. He began at four in the morning. He thought prayer to be more his business than anything else. Luther said: “If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day. I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer” (Luther in Bounds 1996:65).

“We might go through the list of men who have mightily impressed the world for God and we would find them early after God. The more of true saints, the more of praying; the more of praying, the more of true saints. No man gets God who does not follow hard after him and no soul follows hard after God who is not after him in early morn” (Bounds 1996:70).

5.4.2 Communal Prayer Life

5.4.2.1 Morning Devotions

One of the major secrets for the Korean church growth is the early morning devotions. Some churches start at 5 am while others start at 4 am. Almost all the Christians go to their churches for morning devotion every day before they go to work. The pastors lead by example and wake up at 3:30 am.

Chiang advises the Bible College students to keep practicing their morning devotions without giving up. Disciples and home cell leaders are made through morning devotions. You do not need to elect elders or deacons, the obvious ones are those who partake of the morning devotion group. The Pastor will not need to do all the counseling because counseling will happen between those present during the morning devotion. Their problems will already be solved. You will not need to do door-to-door visitation either because God will give them a passion for unsaved friends during the morning devotion.

Church members do not want to work for God because they themselves are hungry. They only eat once a week when they get to church. If they however were to eat the “manna” every morning during devotional time, they will be strong and automatically work for God. Instead of discussing church business till 1 or 3 am in the morning the pastor and co-workers would do better to rather join the morning devotion group every day. God will give them a desire to serve.

In 1996 Grace started morning bible studies with a group of ladies. Currently there are about 10 ladies at this bible study group every day. Two of them have become full time workers serving the Lord with Grace. Since 1998 Chiang has a morning devotion group with some of the brothers. Now there are 10 brothers following him every day at 05:00. In the beginning he thought it was impossible to do it this way with South African Indians. He thought that only the diligent Koreans were able to do this. But the unexpected happened in Lenasia:

“Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this, for your sermons last but an hour or two; your life preaches all the week. If Satan can only make a minister a lover of praise, of pleasure, of good eating, he has ruined your ministry. Give yourself to prayer and get your texts, your thoughts, your words from God. Luther spent his best three hours in prayer” (McCheyne in Bounds 1996:7).



5.4.2.2 Teamwork Prayer

Churches in South Africa, especially the Indian churches, split frequently because every one wants to be a king and no one is willing to serve under somebody else. So this results in sheep stealing and animosity between pastors. The first thing Chiang did was to start a pastors' prayer meeting. Some of the pastors confessed their sin, some of them were enemies before, but now they have forgiven each other. In February 1995 his wife also started the pastor's wives prayer meeting. A revival is expected because the pastors now pray together as a team. When the prayer team grows they will turn the city of Muslims upside down.

Some practical aspects of the power of corporate prayer are the following.

- Spiritual power is multiplied when more people are praying (Matthew. 18:19).
- Greater insights usually come by working with others, especially when an impasse is met.
- Teams provide a good healing and learning environment.
- With team ministry, the person being prayed for is more likely to become dependent on Jesus than of the person who is praying for him or her.
- In teams there is always a witness to what takes place, which is a protection for the person praying (Matthew 18:16).

- In cases involving the casting out of demons, it is always best to have several people present (Leviticus 26:8, Deuteronomy 32:30).

5.4.3 The Prayer Mountain Strategy

5.4.3.1 The Concept of a Prayer Mountain

One should not build a theology on the practice of Jesus of going to the mountain to pray. Jesus went to a mountain to pray not because the mountain has power, but because there is power through prayer. Actually, he went to the mountain to be away from the crowd of people and have quiet times with His Father in heaven without interruption. The fact is however that He is often pictured as doing just that: "After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone" (Matthew 14:23). "One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray and spent the night praying to God" (Luke 6:12). "Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives" (Luke 21:37).

What is called a Prayer Mountain in Korea is really not much more than a retreat area dedicated to prayer. It started there as land that was purchased for a church cemetery. Since Korea has been a traditionally Buddhist country, having a church burial place was very important. In time it became traditional for many churches to have such facilities.

In the Korean Full Gospel Prayer Mountain, many people went to the mountain

to pray and many sick people were healed (Chio 1981:26, my translation). Pastor Fei Hai Lee said: "My church membership had only 40 in attendance at the Sunday service. When I went to Prayer Mountain for fasting and prayer for 15 days, my church started to grow and now we have 140 members" (Chio 1981:41, my translation). A Korean pastor Dong went to Prayer Mountain fasting and prayed for 20 days. Afterward he preached in his church and 50 people repented with tears (Chio 1981:33).

In Korea, pastors usually spend two days on the Prayer Mountain (from Friday to Sunday morning). When they come back from the Prayer Mountain their messages are full of power. Many Christian got healed through mountain's prayer (Chio 1981:134). The Prayer Mountain is the key for the Korean Churches' revival.

Pastor Cho says that many of the problems that he has faced in his church have been solved at the Prayer Mountain (Cho 1993:16). He relates that in 1973, when their present church was being, the dollar was devalued. This caused the Korean currency (which is tied in value to the American dollar) to suffer and they entered into a deep recession. Then the oil crisis hit, worsening their already fragile economy. Their people lost their jobs and their income went down (Cho 1993:107). Seeing that only a miraculous intervention of God would deliver them from a catastrophe, Dr Cho joined the intercessors at Prayer Mountain. One evening, while they were meeting to pray on the ground floor of the unfinished church, several hundred joined him in prayer. An old woman walked slowly in his direction. As she approached the platform, he noticed that tears were filling her eyes. She bowed and said,

“Pastor, I want to give these items to you so that you may sell them for a few pennies to help with our building fund”. He looked down and in her hands was an old rice bowl and a pair of chopsticks. Then, he said to her: “Sister, I can’t take these necessities from you”. “But Pastor, I am an old woman. I have nothing of value to give to my Lord; yet, Jesus has graciously saved me. These items are the only things in the world I possess”, she exclaimed, tears now flowing freely down her wrinkled cheeks. “You must let me give these to Jesus. I can place my rice on old newspapers and I can use my hands to feed myself. I know that I will die soon, so I do not want to meet Jesus without giving Him something on this earth”. As she finished speaking, everyone there began to weep openly. The Holy Spirit’s presence filled the place and they all began to pray in the Spirit. A businessman in the back of the group was deeply moved and said, “Pastor Cho, I want to buy that rice bowl and chopsticks for one thousand dollars”! With that, everyone started to pledge their possessions. Cho’s wife and Cho sold their house and gave the money to the church. This spirit of giving saved them from financial ruin.

As the years have gone by the Prayer Mountain has grown to be a place where thousands of people go daily to have their needs met while fasting and praying. They have added a modern ten-thousand-seat auditorium that is now too small to hold the crowds that come. Attendance varies, but normally at least three thousand people are daily praying, fasting, worshipping and praising the Lord. In this atmosphere of concentrated prayer, healing and miracles are a common occurrence (Cho 1993:108).

In a year more than 300 000 people register at the Prayer Mountain. This makes this “haven of prayer” the front line of their attack on the devil’s forces

on this earth. Nowhere in this world are there more people praying and fasting. God hears their prayers and the answers are too numerous to mention.

Not only do they have group prayer at Prayer Mountain, but they also have individual prayer in their “prayer grottoes”. These small cubicles are actually cut into the side of a hill. At these prayer grottoes, people are quiet before God. In the private “prayer closet” a believer can shut the door and commune with the Heavenly Father in concentrated and prolonged prayer.

The Prayer Mountain is a “haven of prayer”. The place now houses thousands of people not only from Korea, but also from every corner of the earth. Christians long for a place where they can meet God in a dynamic way. Not that God can't be found any place where men seek Him in spirit and in truth, but there is no place on earth that has more concentrated prayer than the Prayer Mountain. Christians are not satisfied with just hearing about the moving of God that but desire to see what God is doing.

Some days they have had as many as twenty thousand people fasting and praying at Prayer Mountain. Yet, normally, they have three thousand people during the week and ten thousand on weekends. Why do so many more people come to Prayer Mountain to fast and pray? Cho's answers to these questions are simple and direct.

“If you or members of your family were dying of cancer and you knew that there was a cure, wouldn't you do

whatever was necessary to procure healing? Many people are suffering from both physical and spiritual cancer. Material prosperity has not brought the happiness and fulfilment that we once thought it would bring. The answer to physical and spiritual problems is healing. We have discovered that people's needs are met in a place totally dedicated to prayer and fasting. This is why they come" (Cho 1993:16).

5.4.3.2 Prayer Mountain in South Africa

It was already related how Chiang started the Daxina Prayer Mountain in 1995. On the Easter morning of 1997 this prayer ministry reached a climax when many churches, originating from different denominations, came together to pray as a unity. On this noteworthy occasion, the Prayer Mountain warriors jointly agreed to launch a number of important initiatives. With the enthusiastic participation of over one thousand youth coming from different churches, this mountain prayer group gave birth to a "Youth Leader's Committee" as well as a "March for Jesus Committee". For all those who attended this Prayer Mountain prayer, God imparted into their hearts a strong desire to pray for pastors and for unity (interview with Monty Patel 2001).

Some of the outcomes of the Daxina Prayer Mountain are the following:

- Amongst those who came to pray at the Prayer Mountain, some had been jobless for as long as five years. Subsequent to their prayers however a

number of them, including Rodney, David, Ray, Leena and Ranica, got a job within the next few days. Brian also got a job in two days time after he prayed for this at the Prayer Mountain. Furthermore, he prayed for buying a house and the following Saturday he was already in his new home.

- Similarly, Brother Monty had been out of work for a long time. When first he came to the Prayer Mountain, he asked God for a job and his request was granted in 2 days. Appreciating God's provision, he became a powerful prayer warrior. In a few months time, he even became the chairman for the Prayer Mountain warriors. One Saturday morning in November 1998, he surprised the assembly of the prayer warriors by saying, "I intend to give up my present job". Everyone then asked, "Why?" He replied, "I wish to give my life to the Lord and become a full time servant for Him. I therefore wish to go to the Rosebank Bible College for studies". All the Prayer Mountain warriors joyously responded, "Surely, we will support you!"

- As for Edien, when he first came to Prayer Mountain, he was a non-Christian and he had been out of job for five years. After they prayed for him, he got a job the following week. God continued to work in him and now he is a member of the marriage counseling team. Sometimes we commented jokingly that the mountain prayer is the greatest employment agency we have ever encountered.

- God healed a number of sick persons when they came to pray at the Prayer Mountain. For example, Rodney's niece was once very ill and dying with cancer. As a result of their prayers God healed the child.

- God provided His healing on broken marriages. Again, as a result of earnest prayers, God brought warring couples back together again. God also provided His healing on unhappy family lives.
- Before they launched their “March for Jesus”, they prayed for a week and fasted for 24 hours. They then witnessed how God’s hand had moved and gathered a tremendously large crowd.
- Many people who went to pray at the Prayer Mountain have now enrolled into Bible Colleges. In addition, Brother Clarian, a member of the Presbyterian Church, used to go to the Prayer Mountain regularly for a year. At present, he has gone to England for training to become a missionary.
- One of the most beautiful aspects of the Prayer Mountain Programme is unity. The entire assembly of the Prayer Warriors constitutes church members coming from many different denominations (interview with Brian Marian 2001).
- The praying movement continued to spread and prayer warriors were now having overnight prayer meetings at the churches as well (interview with Monty Patel 2001).

There are also some interesting future plans in place:

- They plan to organise a prayer walk at both the locations of Daxina and Zak Park. In addition to the Prayer Mountain warriors, they hope to mobilise the

churches to participate actively in praying as well.

- They plan to organise many overnight-praying meetings at different churches.
- They plan to start a 24 hours prayer center.
- They also plan to start a marriage-counseling center. Dalit Condent currently provides marriage counseling service and 11 couples have already participated.
- They plan to start a youth centre such that we may win more youth for Christ.
- They plan to start a Bible College link with ICBM.
- They plan to conduct a prayer retreat at Immanuel Prayer Mountain on two occasions (interview with Monty Patel 2001).

After one year Chiang started another Prayer Mountain in Zak Park, together with a Pastor Moodley. He took leadership of this for the first month and then handed over to him. This prayer is conducted every Saturday morning at Zak Park Prayer Mountain. About 30 people participate and it is a tremendous blessing for all those who attend. Pastor Sailas also joined them with his church members. He believes that the prayers made at the Prayer Mountain are very effective. In their prayers for the surrounding areas, they acquire a

better mission vision and visualise how great their Creator truly is. The faithful intercession prayers they make enable all things to become possible (interview with Moodley 2001).

According to Pastor Moodley (interview in 2001) some of the outcomes of this Prayer Mountain are:

- Many sick people who came to pray at this Prayer Mountain were healed and recovered. As they prayed, they experienced God's wonderful healing power. Amongst the sick was a 12-year-old girl who used to have Asthma and couldn't walk for more than 15 meters without help. As she came every Saturday to the Prayer Mountain for prayers, she has now been touched by God and healed.
- There was a case of a housewife with two children who had a broken relationship with her husband. The relationship was so bad that it appears to the woman that divorce was the only way out. After their encounter at the Prayer Mountain, the pastor went to her home and found how chaotic her marriage had been. He took the opportunity to share Jesus Christ with her family. The lady lamented that it was already too late for anything and she was just about to submit the divorce papers to the lawyer. He asked her to give him the paper and, there and then, he prayed on their behalf for God to drive away the spirit of divorce. Today both husband and wife come to the church regularly. God brought reconciliation through prayer.
- A lady from a Hindu home had a back problem. When invited to come and

pray at the Prayer Mountain she declined and said she could not walk up to the hill. They encouraged her and suggested that they could pick her up by car to the mountain. At the mountaintop, they laid hands upon her and pleaded for God to help her. Amazingly, her back problem was healed. She is now a saved soul and attends church regularly.

- Another case was a young man called Ruany who was entangled with drinking and smoking problems. He came to the Prayer Mountain and through prayer was now delivered from alcoholism and smoking. He has become very involved in church activities and is now leading the youth group.
- Pastor Moodley prayed for unity to encompass Zak Park. They desired to see unity amongst leaders and congregations. Ever since they started praying at Zak Park pastors from nearby areas were willing to come every Wednesday and pray together. In addition to having combined service on Easter and on Christmas day, once a month on Sunday evening, they meet together with pastors and congregations to fellowship. Undoubtedly, through prayers our dream became true.
- Zak Park used to be a strong Muslim city. Originally the residents would not agree for them to use the community hall for Christian activities. However, after they prayed very hard for it, they now allow us to use it for Sunday services.

The Zak Park Prayer Mountain is so blessed that they plan to build a prayer house up on the mountaintop.

At the invitation of a SIM missionary Chiang went to the Roodepoort Pastor's Fraternity for a gathering in April 1999. In the meeting, one of the major issues that he shared with the pastors was about "Prayer Mountain for Church growth". A local lay leader Brother Deon, after hearing Chiang's message, became very interested in the concept of a Prayer Mountain. In view of his keen interest, Chiang invited Brother Deon and drove around the neighbourhood to look for a mountain that is suitable for all the churches. Finally, they selected a mountain behind Deon's house that is centrally located and oversees 30 churches in the vicinity. Chiang gave this mountain a name called Calvary Prayer Mountain because below the mountain is a cemetery.

From February 2000 Brother Deon goes up this Prayer Mountain at 6 am every day to offer his prayers to God. Besides studying at Bible College and regardless of the weather, he continues to go up to the Prayer Mountain faithfully for daily prayers. Every Saturday two SIM missionaries and some other pastors join him for praying at the Prayer Mountain. From time to time, Chiang would bring some prayer warriors from Lenasia to Roodepoort to show his support also.

During a trip to the Braamfisher area in February 2001, Deon found that, for the many coloured people living there they have not had a church yet. God moved his heart and he decided to start a tent church there. Behind the newly established church there is a mountain which is within 5 minutes reach. Deon therefore asked Chiang's help and together they started up another new Prayer Mountain Programme (interview with Deon 2001).

In short, one can see how, in the case of Deon, a person who prays regularly at Prayer Mountain would become a prayer warrior. He then moves on to give his life to the Lord and prepare for full time service. By now, he has started a new tent church in just one year's time. How wonderful it is for God to change people's lives through prayer.

Brian Marian's testimony is that whilst he would normally feel much more inhibited when he was at home, the open space of the Prayer Mountain really enables him to cry loudly and pour his heart out unto the Lord. Over here, all work in the mind is solely the work of prayer. The spiritual rule seems to be that if victory were gained in prayers, it would similarly happen in the physical work. Furthermore, earnest praying at the Prayer Mountain enabled him to behold a wider vision as well. They therefore have daringly prayed for greater things to happen, such as the future conversion of the mosques into 24 hours Prayer Centres.

One of the most wonderful aspects of the Prayer Mountain strategy is the extent to which it is bringing different churches together and forges a unity amongst them. Important issues that constitute a significant part of their earnest prayers includes war against drug abuse, alcoholism and the breaking down of the strongholds of Islam and Hinduism. In prayer meetings, apart from sharing God's word spontaneously, participants also decided to prepare for a "March for Jesus" and to start a new Bible College under ICBM. They also believed that, through prayers, they could launch the biggest "March for Jesus" in Lenasia's history. The weapon that they choose to use is neither a persuasion through preaching, nor the performing of miracles, but reliance

solely on prayer. In this regard, Jesus has demonstrated to us a good example on how seriously we should pray when we desire to see the glory of God. As we can see throughout the New Testament, Jesus normally did all sorts of work with relative ease, such as the giving of sermons, healing of the sick and even the raising of the dead. However, he would exert all His strength and had sweated profusely when He prayed. As recorded in Luke, “He prayed more earnestly and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground” (Luke 22:44). “Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death and was heard because of His godly fear” (Hebrews 5:7).

5.5 THE STRIVING FOR UNITED ACTION

5.5.1 Unity

The last element of the Spiritual Strategy is the emphasis on unity in the body of Christ. This is not the place to expound either the necessity or the nature of this unity, but the goal will be to show the importance of unity for an ongoing missionary work.

“Directly through His own operation and indirectly through the mystical incorporation of believers in the one body of Christ the Spirit is the unity-effecting Agent in the Church. ...It is necessary always to remember

that the true unity of the Church rests upon and arises out of the glory of Christ, and that this glory is the power of the Holy Spirit manifesting itself in the witness and life of the Church (Boer 1961:202).

“If the kind of unity that liberal and uncritical evangelical Christianity so often espouses is here rejected by Christ, there is another kind of unity that is hardly more acceptable to Him. This is the unity that is so dear to the churchmen of strict orthodoxy. It is the idea that the unity of the Church is only a spiritual unity, and that the brokenness of the Church, while regrettable, is not wholly incompatible with this spiritual unity (Boer 1961:203).

Jesus prayed in John 17:11 “Holy Father protect them by the power of your name, so that they may be one as we are one”. Jesus knew that individualism or self-centredness is probably the greatest threat to the church and therefore he prayed against it. Paul takes up the same idea when he encourages the church in Ephesus to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace, being completely humble and gentle, patient and bearing with one another is love simply because we have one body and one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father to us all.

“The mutual coordination of mission and unity is non-negotiable. Holding onto both mission and unity and to both truth and unity presupposes tension. A united church in mission is essential in light of the fact that the church’s

mission will never come to an end. Mission in unity means an end to the distinction between “sending” and “receiving” churches. Ultimately unity in mission and mission in unity do not merely serve the church but, through the church, stand in the service of humankind and seek to manifest the cosmic rule of Christ. We have to confess that the loss of *ecclesial* unity is not just a vexation but a sin. Our goal is not a fellowship exempt from conflict, but one which is characterized by unity in reconciled diversity” (Bosch 1991:465).

The men of the world must see one fellowship in which there is no brokenness, no division, no hopelessness, but rather the unity and power of one body, one fellowship, one hope, one society. This must draw men to inquire after the source of this unity, this power, this hope, this holy fellowship. And their inquiry must lead them to discover this source in Christ the Head of the Church, the Sent One of the Father. To this interest and to this acknowledgment the world must be brought by the visibly united witness and the visibly united life of the people of God. For if the spiritually undiscerning world does not see with its eyes that which is so manifestly wanting in its own life, how shall a hidden spiritual unity bring it to this insight? The unity of the Church is according to Jesus’ own words, a great missionary instrument given to the Church. Nowhere is this instrument more needed than on the mission field.

“The Church must therefore unceasingly confront herself with the demand of Christ for complete unity, that is: a unity in the Spirit expressed

in the ministry and life of one visible body of Christ. Where this unity does not exist we fall short of the glory of God. For the Son was glorified in order that through the bestowal of His glory on the Church He might make the Church one” (Boer 1961:204).

It is on the basis of this that we are going to emphasise teamwork. Teamwork is not a suggestion, but a command from God. The “Lone Ranger” mentality is sinful and must be extracted like a rotten tooth from a jaw.

Paul has the last word in I Corinthians 12:1-28 with his analogy of the physical body to the body of Christ, the church. We need each other. No man is an island and cannot abide alone.

5.5.2 Teamwork for Unity

5.5.2.1 Introduction

The author proposes to show that teamwork is essential for unity and church revival. A maverick spirit only fragments God’s church, but a “pooling” of gifts, talents and human resources is of paramount importance in enabling the church of God to function at her maximum potential in order to fulfill the “Great Commission” and in so doing accomplish our mission to the unreached.

5.5.2.2 Gleanings from the Asian Culture

Underpinning Chinese culture is a principle that can be called “Personal

Heroism". This conveys the idea of one hero, one kingdom and one nation. Hence, all Chinese find it necessary to submit to one leader. In this way a subtle form of teamwork is unwittingly introduced into Chinese culture by this principle.

Teamwork is even more basically portrayed in Chinese society, that of the family. In a fundamentally patriarchal culture the grandfather or father rules his family with an "iron fist". A strictly top to bottom hierarchy is formed, with the grandfather or father as the apex of the triangle of self-proclaimed power. Although it is authoritarian, it can be viewed as the initial stages of teamwork in China.

Poverty in China also plays a role in promoting teamwork. It is common practice for an entire family of five to sleep on one bed using one blanket. As uncomfortable as this may appear to a Westerner, the principle of teamwork is evident here.

The Japanese also succeed in teamwork. At a macro level the Japanese pledge allegiance to their superiors, even to the point of death. Very strong teamwork begins even in childhood when an entire family may take a bath together. Hence at a micro level the seeds of teamwork are sown. A sort of "kamikaze" attitude prevails in the work situation - the Japanese will not go on strike. The church will do well to adopt this attitude!

5.5.2.3 Teamwork for the New South Africa

Now that South Africans of all colours worship together, more attention than in the past must be given to teamwork. Prejudice must first be identified as a sin and dealt with from the pulpit. It must be dealt with in the same manner as with any other sin in their lives. Only after prejudice is dealt with by the power of the cross and the blood of Jesus Christ can true teamwork come into being.

The talents and gifts of the various peoples of South Africa must be harnessed. In this way inferiority complexes will soon evaporate and the once disadvantaged groups will want to work together in order to extend the influence of the church. The ominous threat of Islam, Hinduism and secular humanism can only be effectively counter-acted if the Christians will combine their talents and present a united front. Teamwork will be the natural overflow. Cross-cultural interaction must consider the various temperaments of our different cultures. This sociological consideration must involve the understanding and respect of the “unique” way that different people do things.

5.5.2.4 Teamwork in Large Churches

Because of the greater demands of a large church, specialisation is increasing. There are “music pastors”, “youth pastors”, “counselors” and so on. For teamwork among these gifted men to succeed, each pastor must recognise, respect and release these “specialists” into their fields of service. Pastors must understand that they are shepherding God’s flock and not theirs.

5.5.2.5 Teamwork from the Bible

There are several examples of teamwork in the Old Testament. The New Testament too is replete with examples of teamwork. We see a clear case of this when the Jesus sent out His disciples in couples, “two by two”. He had a desire for teamwork that consumed Him. In John 15:4 we read “No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine”. Christ is intolerant of an independent spirit. It is clear according to the greatest promoter of teamwork that if you do it alone, you will be unsuccessful and unless the Lord builds the house, those who labour do so in vain. In addition, Paul stresses teamwork in terms of submission to one another in the Lord. Teamwork is born out of submission. It is the recognition of the God-given authority, gifts and talents of others. It is a willingness to become nothing and to become obedient as Jesus who left His glorious splendour in order to become submissive to the point of death on a cross! Hence, one has to deny one’s individuality in order to be subsumed into God’s master plan for evangelism.

5.5.2.6 Teamwork for Unity

Christian women have suffered much at the hands of narrow male chauvinism. Women should not be precluded from exercising their gifts. For example, Miriam led the praise and worship team, Deborah commanded the armies of Israel, Phoebe carried the book of Romans and Priscilla explained the gospel more fully to Apollos. Women must be encouraged to use their gifts. Dr Cho reports from Korea that 70% of his home cell leaders are ladies. They are more inclined to talk in the cell groups than men. Secondly, they are more willing to submit to the pastor than the men and thirdly they have more zeal for the Lord.

Our Lord Jesus made it abundantly clear that “ a kingdom that is divided against itself will be ruined and every city or household divided against itself will not stand” (Matthew 12:25). This is true in every sphere of life. The maxim of the world is: “Unity is strength.” Divided opinions, goals and visions will ruin any organisation. The devil loves to use division to fragment the church.

5.5.2.7 Unity Brings Revival

In a climate of unity and oneness God revives His church. He is able to do for the church what was done to the dry bones in Ezekiel’s vision. In Psalm 133 we read: “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity”. Acts 2:8 shows a revival breaking in when people were united in prayer. All over the world it is found that unity at ministerial level is blessed by God with a revival. When the church is united she will become a conduit through whom the Holy Spirit will blow in the church and into the world. Our service in unity will let God work through us to reach the unsaved. Our lives will actually become an incarnation of Jesus. We will become “little” Christs, where the life of Jesus will flow out of us to touch the lives of others. Finally, teamwork helps to utilise all the church’s gifts in order to evangelise the world. In a climate of oneness, God will smile upon the church of revival. Teamwork is undoubtedly the bloodstream of the church.

5.5.2.8 Problems and Practicalities of Teamwork

Samson had no teamwork. Because he was a mighty warrior, he did not



need any one to help him. He alone could kill a thousand of the enemy. Consequently, when he fell into temptation he had no one there to advise him. Jonah was a powerful speaker, just one day his message could touch the whole city and repent. But he had no teamwork. No one there to advise him or correct him.

There was a young Indian man who was working so hard he did not have time to buy his own wedding suit. His mother and his sister and his grandmother helped him to find a suit and they all rushed off to every shop looking to purchase a suit. But because it was late in the afternoon, most of the shops were closing and there was little to choose. The only suit they could find had pants that were too long. The salesman advised them to cut off 14 cm after which it would fit properly. That night at 9 pm, before retiring to bed, the sister remembered and cut off 14 cm. off his pants. About 11 pm when his mother retired, she also remembered to cut the pants 14 cm shorter. At 3 am the grandmother got up to go to the toilet and passed by the table and found the pants there. She also cut off another 14 cm. The result was that the groom wore mini pants at his wedding (Chinese GECCOWE conference in the Philippines, 1991, recorded by writer). This was the result of individualism. Everyone was doing their own thing without communicating with one another. Poor in teamwork.

When Chiang was in Polowu Village in Liberia, no one had a car. He was the only one who had a four-wheel motorcycle. Whenever he was driving on the roads every one was afraid of his motor cycle's noise and would jump out of the way into the rice fields. There weren't any car accidents and no traffic

lights at all. But in South Africa, where there are many motor vehicles, all need to be involved and care for one another. Individuals are free, but very isolated, lonely and selfish.

When we join a team and work together, we need to share our ideas with one another, communicate, understand, organise, take the leadership, take the responsibility, concern, care, discipline, forgive and humbly learn to accept each other. Just like from single life to family life, seems difficult, but sweet. God created the family for us to practice "team work". If we are successful there then we will move onto the community and even change the whole world.

5.5.3 Mountain Prayer for Unity and Revival

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore" (Psalms 133:1-3).

Without unity there is no revival. The precious oil that our poet referred to could be thought of as the Holy Spirit. As Aaron was the high priest and this oil was poured on his head and ran down on his beard, we may take it to symbolise that all pastors must first be empowered by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. In other words, church revival starts from the revival of the shepherd

pastors. As the Psalms has illustrated, the oil ran "down upon the collar of his robes". We may take this robe to symbolize the robe of righteousness. Once it has become sanctified, the Holy Spirit may then start to take full control. Subsequent to the revival of the shepherds, the church revival would come along.

Let us meditate upon Psalm 133:3 also: "It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion". The mountain of Zion is the mountain of prayer. We may note that in Korea it has become a common practice for many pastors to go for fasting and praying on Prayer Mountains. They often pray from Friday to Sunday morning. On Sunday morning they come down from the mountain and immediately go up to the pulpit. Their message is full of power, since the Holy Spirit in accordance with the enlightenment from the mountain, anointed it. Having heard about the Korean experience, some pastors from Taiwan had decided to go there and learn about the Prayer Mountain themselves. When they returned to Taiwan they also started a prayer mountain. At one time 500 people went there for prayer. Some went there and fasted and prayed for 7 days. Consequently, it brought a great revival to many Taiwanese churches. So, it is clear that church revival starts with a pastor's revival.

On the other hand, a pastor's revival starts from unity amongst pastors. Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another". Furthermore, repentance comes first before unity whereas repentance is preceded by the humbling of our old self before the Lord. As was pointed out: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then

will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Today the land of Lenasia desperately needs God's healing, as it is plagued with two kinds of cancer. Apart from the bodily cancer we all know of, there is also a kind of spiritual cancer in this world. We may be aware that, by population, the Muslim amount to 70%, the Hindu 25% whereas Christian amount to only 5%. We are clearly dwelling in Satan's territories. It is saddening to see our churches divided and the body of Christ is hence separated and cut into pieces. Since we are the minority and occupy 5% only, we need to pray together, to help one another, to learn from one another and to encourage each other not to care solely for our own small vineyard but should, more importantly, care for the Kingdom of God. In addition, we should first humble ourselves before the Lord and to one another. We should re-build one another up again through prayer and then God will heal our land. The Lord had said, “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity” When we are united, then the Holy Spirit will come and the revival will in turn take place. We can then turn the city upside down and can conquer cities for God's kingdom. We can take the suburbs of Eldorado Park, Enerdale, Zak Park, Orange farm, Lenz for God's kingdom.

5.5.4 March for Jesus as a Spiritual Strategy for Unity in World Mission

5.5.4.1 Reconciliations

Here are what some leaders in the world Christian movement are saying about

the “March for Jesus” idea.

- “The praise and prayer marches for Jesus offer the body of Christ world-wide a unique opportunity to acknowledge visibly the lordship of Jesus Christ over every city and country on the face of the earth. It is a declaration to the principalities and powers that Jesus is King. This may do more to advance the gospel in the world than any single event in history since the resurrection and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. God will be honoured as his son is uplifted” (Luis Bush).
- Reinhardt Bonnke concurs: “The March for Jesus is from God. The sole of your foot has something to do with spiritual possession when we move according to the Word of the Lord. And that word from the mouth of God is, ‘Go ye... preach the Gospel to every creature’”.
- “Jesus said that we are a light set on a hill that cannot be hidden. There is a time and place for secret ministries, but there is also a time and place for public and high profile ministries. Let us rally behind this vision and lift Jesus high among the nations”, said Loren Cunningham of Youth With A Mission.
- “It is high time that massive numbers of Christians banded together to declare the lordship of Jesus over our cities and nations! God has raised up the March for Jesus as His principal catalytic instrument for bringing this into reality in our times. Public praise and prayer through marches for Jesus in every city have the potential to change the world. The hand of God is moving powerfully and I do not just want to be a spectator - I want to be a participant”,

said Tom Houston, previous leader of the Lausanne Movement.

- “Marches for Jesus are seen as a very significant element in modern church life. The church has a message to proclaim and we should not be embarrassed or frightened about taking it into the market place on the streets of our communities. Such events are also signs of our unity together because every denomination is involved in this form of witness” (Archbishop William Carey).

- “From a very small beginning of intercession and spiritual warfare for the city of London the March for Jesus has spread not only to many other cities, but now to the capitals of Europe and beyond. The March for Jesus is more than a group of Christians demonstrating their faith, it is a spiritual act of unity and solidarity of people of faith and goodwill, united for the causes of righteousness and against the forces of darkness” (Floyd McClung of Youth With A Mission).

- “The world has a need to know that Christians are a praying presence among them and that we believe that unified prayer is an awesome power for social change. This march will make that message clear” (Tony Campolo).

(www.igateway.com/clients/mfjpa/events.htm, 10 June 2000)

5.5.4.2 Motivation for the Movement

Various arguments can be brought forward as motivation for the Christian people to come out on the street. Without this movement, all churches would

still be hiding within their buildings, unseen by the world. However, once they come forth from their hiding places, they can proclaim the victory of the Lord in the open air throughout the whole city. Jesus once said, “You are the salt of the world”. Clearly, if the salt stayed in the container, nobody would know its value. Only when we shake the container and let the salt come out and fall upon meat and soup, can it bring the good taste out of food.

It is impressive when young and old Christians alike, including the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the black and the white, the coloured people and the Indians, all march for Jesus together. We can then be seen as one united body in Christ and no longer divided into different denominations, generations and races. Therefore, we believe the “March for Jesus” is one of the most important outreach strategies for churches in the 21st century. By these actions the divided churches become the one and only universal church.

When a multitude of Christians march together for Jesus, they actually launch two holy missions. One is to lift Jesus high for adoration, so that all would be drawn to follow Him. Secondly, the Christians come out into the open and become a blessing to all nations.

Another significant aspect of the “March for Jesus” movement is that most of the marches are organised by lay leaders. This activity therefore serves to mobilise many lay Christians in addition to the participation of just a small number of clergymen (interview with Brian Marian, 2001).

One of the saddest things in the today is the division in God's Church. The

power of God came upon the early church when they were all of one accord. The blessing of Pentecost probably would never have been given but for that spirit of unity. It is noticeable even today that when churches work together the blessing is greater.

Dr Guthrie illustrates this fact where he says:

“Separate the atoms which make the hammer and each would fall on the stone as a snowflake; but welded into one and wielded by the firm arm of the quarry man, it will break the massive rocks asunder. Divide the waters of Niagara into distinct and individual drops and they would be no more than the falling rain, but in their united body they would quench the fires of Vesuvius and have some to spare for the volcanoes of other mountains” (Guthrie in Moody 1980:72).

and

“I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I

follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptised into the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:10-16).

It is a mystery why God has allowed the existence of so many denominations on earth. There are diversities of gifts – that is clearly taught – but there is one Spirit. If we have all been redeemed with the same blood, we ought to see eye to eye in spiritual things. Paul writes: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord" (Moody 1980:73).

Sometimes we focus too much on theology and neglect the Bible; sometimes we focus too much on ritual and neglect the Holy Spirit and sometimes we focus on all the wrong things and neglect all the right things.

Suppose Paul should turn up in the midst of us today, the traditional churches might ask him, "Do you belong to the mainstream denominations? We believe in theology and tradition". He would probably answer, "Yes, I am a Jew, under Gamaliel" (Acts 22:3), "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee" (Acts 23:6). Then, the Evangelical leaders would ask him, "Do you believe in evangelism and the Bible?" He would say, "Yes, I am an evangelist too. I am a Bible writer, I wrote 13 books of the New Testament". Finally, the Pentecostal leaders would ask him, "Are you a member of the Pentecostal church? Do you believe in miracles and wonders?" It is likely that he would reply, "Yes. Even my handkerchief can work wonders as well". For the ensuing question, "Do you speak in tongues?" He would probably say, "Of course, 'I thank God that I

“speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue” (1 Corinthians 14:18-19).

As we can readily see, each and every denomination has its own merits. Some are very good at Bible teaching but fail to see the importance of miracles. Some denominations emphasise too much on miracles while caring too little about theology. Clearly, we should all strive to be like the Apostle Paul with a balanced view, paying due respect to theology, studying the Bible and also seeing the importance of miracles. We need to maintain balance in every aspect and we need to preserve unity amongst us.

“Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly - mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? For when one says ‘I follow Paul’ and another, ‘I follow Apollos’, are you not mere men? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe - as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow” (1 Corinthians 3:1-7).

Why would God allow different denominations to appear on earth? One of the reasons is because God is not a dictator. He has a large heart and can accept us to be different to one another. He allows us to have creative thinking and to choose different ways to worship him. Since the Tower of Babel, the multitude of human races on earth all speak different languages, have different cultures, customs and different ways of thinking. God in His wisdom appreciates that we could be different in many ways. It is not such a bad thing after all because this teaches us to be more creative and flexible.

In short, God has created on earth different races and different people. He hence allows different denominations to exist in order to meet the different needs of different people. Although there is only one Bible, God has made it sufficient to meet the need of different cultures, ages, races and generations. God has made it beautiful that we are different. Despite our differences, for the sake of Jesus, we can appreciate and learn from one another. If we love and accept only people like us, then we are no different from the Pagans. However, if we are able to love others who are different, then the power of the Gospel may be revealed to the world through our witness.

“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out

not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:1-5).

Verse 4 of the message above enlightens us about the true meaning of “interests”. Some of us may be interested in praying aloud, whereas others may prefer to pray quietly instead. It is important that we allow and respect one another to act in accordance with their need in front of God. For the phrase “the Mind of Jesus”, the Chinese version of the Bible has translated it to read “the same heart of Jesus”. If Jesus’ heart and mind were set firmly for unity, we surely must follow His footstep.

John recorded that the last prayer Jesus Christ made on earth, before they led Him away to Calvary; that His disciples might all be one. “Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name - the name you gave me - so that they may be one as we are one, I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:11, 23). He could look down the stream of time and see that divisions would come – how Satan would try to divide the flock of God. Nothing will silence unbelief so quickly as when Christians everywhere become united. Then our testimony will have weight with the ungodly. But when they see how Christians are divided, they will not believe their testimony. The Holy Spirit is grieved and there is little power where there is no unity.

It was recorded that John Wesley once had a strange dream. He found himself standing by the gate of Hell. He then asked the gatekeeper, “Are

there any Catholic congregations in Hell?" The reply was, "Yes". He then asked, "How about Anglican congregations?" The answer was, "Yes". He continued to ask, "How about Lutheran members?" The answer was no different, "Yes". Finally, Wesley hesitated and asked, "Well, are there any Wesleyan church members in Hell also?" The answer remained, "Yes". The gatekeeper then brought Wesley to the gate of Heaven. Wesley also asked the other gatekeeper, "Are there any Catholic members in Heaven?" The answer was, "No". "How about Anglican congregations?" "No" "How about Lutherans?" "No" "Then, how about my own denomination, the Wesley Church members? Are they not in Heaven? Surely they must be in Heaven as we emphasise so much on holiness you know." The gatekeeper replied, "Sorry, no". Wesley then cried out loudly, "If all denominations go to Hell while no one goes to Heaven, then who would be saved?" The gatekeeper explained, "Only those whose hearts were cleansed by the 'Blood of Jesus' may enter the Kingdom of God." Therefore, the crux of the matter is, we were not saved by denominations but by the "Blood of Jesus" only (message tapes of Rev Miller, 1994).

"The church is not the foundation of Christ, but Christ is the founder of the church" (Niebuhr 1951:95). As Christ is the founder of the church, we clearly should not exalt denominations more than Christ Himself. On the other hand, as all denominations are founded upon Christ, we therefore should unify as one body within Him.

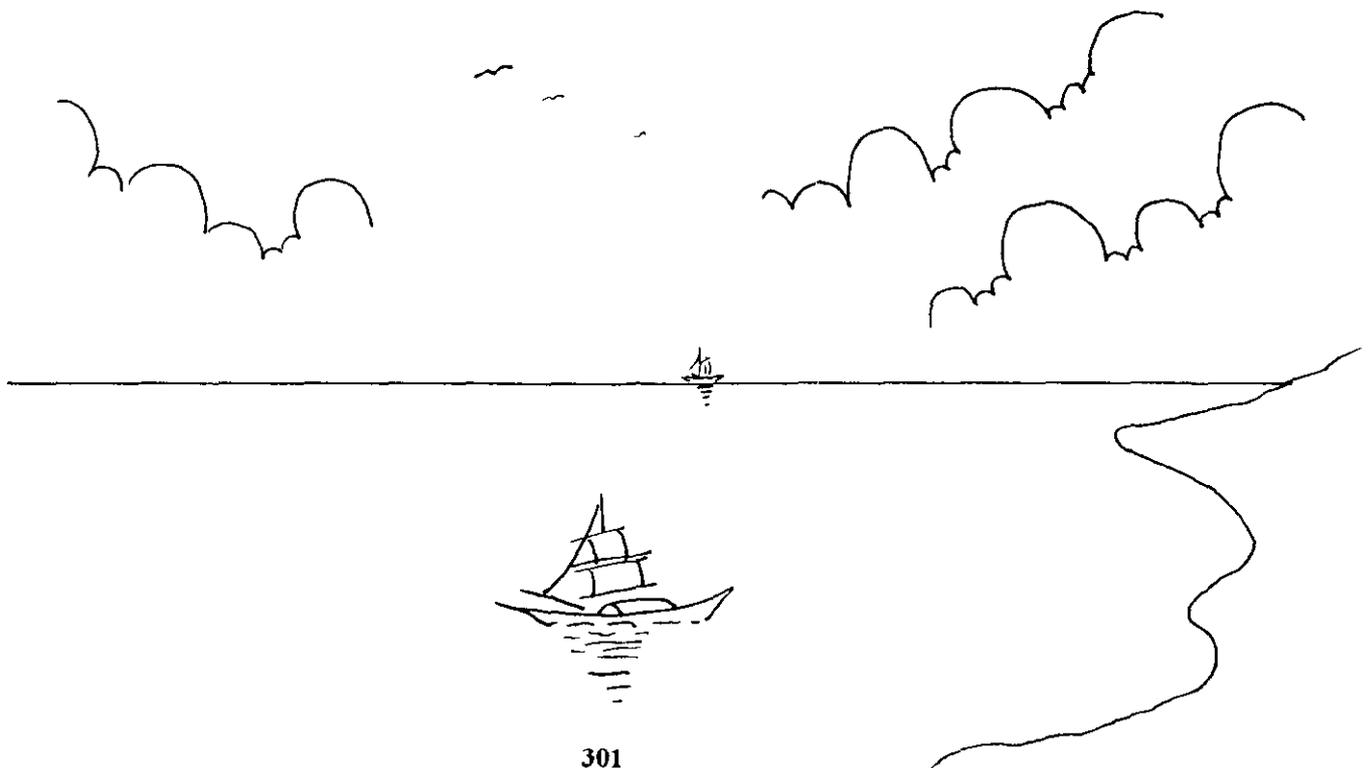
5.6 CONCLUSION

“At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask! What shall I give you?” And Solomon said: “I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in... Give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” The speech pleased the Lord” (I King 3:5-10).

as well as

“And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore” (I King 4:29).

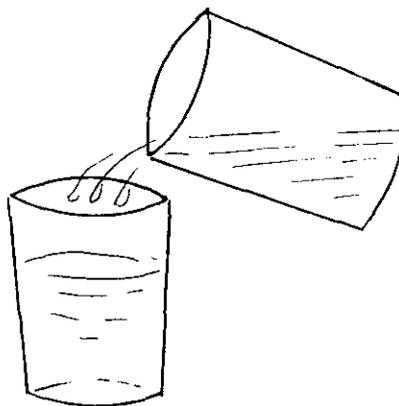
“Largeness of Heart”



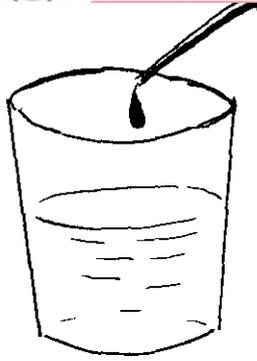
If some one gives you a lot of gifts but your house is too small and you leave the gifts outside under the sun and rain, they will get spoiled. So when God gave Solomon a gift “Wisdom” He also gave him another gift that was “the Largeness of heart”.

Wisdom without a largeness of heart can be very dangerous. The wisdom can be like a knife to cook or become a cruel knife to kill many people. For example: in the case of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao Ze-Dong. They were endowed with wisdom but without a largeness of heart. They killed millions of people. That is why God gave Solomon this extra gift “the largeness of heart”.

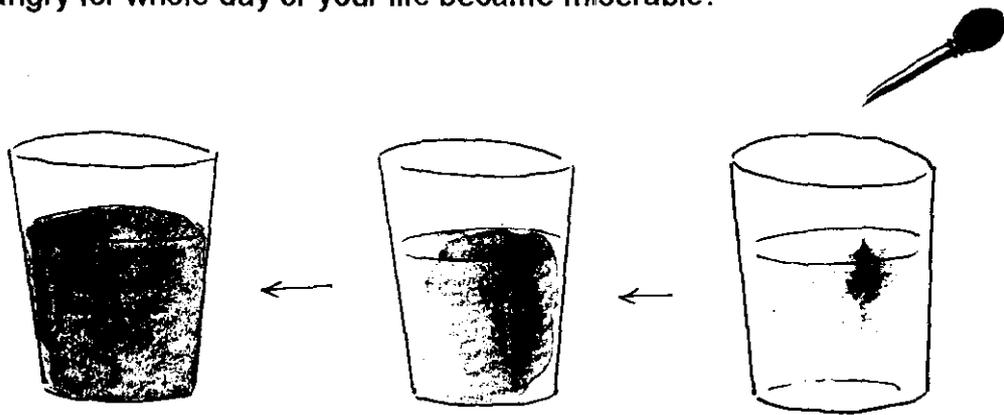
It is easy for us to accept one who is the same culture as our own, or language, but it is very difficult to accept one from a different culture, background, denominations and races from that of our own. Man is self-centred. The same like us is right but what is different is wrong. We love the one who loves us. When someone criticise us or condemn us, we hate that person.



Pouring water into water doesn't change the colour -- like from same culture to same culture. When people praise you, one can easily accept them, but when your boss, or friend or wife disapproves, one gets hurt. One becomes angry, revengeful or even commit suicide.



If your heart is very narrow like a small glass, a drop of ink in it will blacken the water. This means that when someone says something hurtful then one becomes angry for whole day or your life became miserable.



If you throw a lot of ink into the ocean, do you think the ocean will become black? No. Why? Because the ocean is big. May the Lord give us largeness of heart so that we are able to accept those who are different, because without His help we are devoid of the ability to open up to each other. For Jesus' sake we are willing to forgive, understand, accept and become one in Christ.

