

Paul Had The RIGHT IDEA!

by Missionary Vernon Anderson

METHOD! The question is how did Paul accomplish in 15 years what has not been duplicated in the last 2000 years? We have the same God, the same Message, the same Holy Spirit, and much better facilities. Certainly the opposition in the time of Paul was greater than today. Wasn't he hindered at every turn and even imprisoned at the peak of his ministry? His persecution was above measure.

Could it be that Paul's methods were superior to ours in this enlightened century? Mission leaders are concerned. They are restudying Paul's achievements to reevaluate their own methods which seem to have forsaken the Pauline pattern.

◆ Roland Allen in his book *Missionary Methods, St. Paul's or Ours* challenges us to reconsider missionary methods in the light of the early church and to contrast the outcome of the last 150 years with St. Paul's decade of work in Greece and Asia Minor.

◆ Have we produced with all our modern means and methods in 150 years what Paul produced with his methods in 10 years? If the answer is: No, then we should change over to Paul's methods which are actually simple and a few hours of study would start us on the right road.

OBJECTIVES

For a moment, think about objectives because they are vitally related to methods. Paul had ONE top priority objective which inspired him unendingly: Acts 26:16-19 can be put into one word *EVANGELIZE!* The one goal constantly before Paul was *Evangelize the World*. If we are going to follow Paul, this same driving goal must constrain us—and nothing must deter us from the goal of Evangelism.

CONSTANT TRAVELING AND PREACHING

You cannot study Paul without a map, and that map must cover the whole world as Paul knew it. The longest stop Paul ever made in one area is three years.

◆ Method Number One: a missionary keeps moving. He does not plant himself in one place nor does he pastor a local church.

◆ Paul constantly preached to the lost and he taught the new converts basic truths which did not require years of study. As Scofield points out in his introduction to 1 Thessalonians: "The epistle is most interesting as showing the richness in doctrine of the primitive evangelism. During a mission of about one month the apostle had taught all the great doctrines of the Christian faith."

◆ In Ephesus Paul declares that he taught them all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27), and thus during the two years of teaching he was simultaneously evangelizing all of Asia! (Acts 19:10.) Accordingly, the missionary today builds a framework of salvation, assurance, security, hope, deity of Christ, forcing them to take basic truths and feed themselves, going on to evangelize and feed others.

◆ Paul never stayed in one area to preach for years to people who would not listen. Christ had commanded him: *Get thee far hence for they will not receive thy testimony!*

Keep moving, keep reaching and preaching to the lost, teach the new believers basic truths, then leave them with the Word and the Holy Spirit. Such simplicity was extremely effective.

ESTABLISHING A LOCAL CHURCH

Paul was careful to gather new converts into a local assembly—a church in a house (Rom. 16:5). As far as we know, there were no church buildings for the first 200 years of church history.

◆ Paul did not get the people excited about a building. **YOU ARE THE BUILDING**, he said. Paul did not pastor

their churches nor did he assign one of his co-workers to pastor these churches. Pethyridge, in his pamphlet on the early church, points out an important truth: the early Church was taught to regard themselves not merely as a collection of saved individuals, but as active members of the Body of Christ. Not only all believers from the one Body universal, but each group functioned as the Body locally. In each of the three cases where these are mentioned (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4), there is no suggestion of one man ministering to the whole group, but each is shown as having the privilege of possessing some spiritual gift, with the responsibility to minister this gift to the rest of the local church so that every believer is looked on as a minister to the rest.

◆ Roland Allen further pointed out that Paul was able to establish and equip churches with an ordained ministry only because he selected natural leaders approved by the churches, trained them briefly, and committed them to the power and sufficiency of the Holy Spirit, ordaining them within a short time after their salvation. This statement is proved in Acts 14:23.

TRAINING CHURCH PLANTERS AND LEADERS

Paul's training of church leaders was done in the church. He never took pastors out of a church and trained them in a foreign place, but he selected those in the church who were already leaders and trained them, laying hands on them.

◆ From each church he selected other men and women to leave the church and follow him in church planting.

◆ Acts 16 tells of the call of Timothy. Acts 20:4 lists a number of men from various churches who accompanied Paul. He trained church leaders in the church and he trained field workers in the field. On the job training was used by Paul. Just now men are beginning to realize the effectiveness of this method after all.

The new emphasis in theological training is called Theological Education by Extension (TEE), which simply means we are going back to Pauline methods.

We are taking the training to the church and not the church to the training. This TEE method has been so successful in South America that a number of resident schools have closed down, producing more results.

MONEY

It is amazing but in Paul's ministry in Acts, little mention is made of finances. We do read in Acts 18:3 that Paul made tents to support himself. Paul mentions money very sparingly in his epistles and is very careful not to ask for funds for himself or his ministry. He does thank those who did help him, such as the Philippians.

◆ Evidently money was not a major concern. The only real concern regarding money was that the churches would support the widows and the poor saints.

◆ It is easy to see why Paul was not so concerned with money. He did not build church buildings, Bible schools, hospitals, or educational institutions.

◆ The leadership and pastoral duties of the local church were fulfilled by men in the church who had their own jobs to support them.

◆ Paul himself had meager financial needs as he lived without any certain dwelling place, his food and clothing being very simple. An interesting passage in this respect is Acts 20:33-35:

I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

◆ Paul not only worked with his hands to support himself, but those that were with him. There was really very little money involved in Paul's missionary work. This man certainly lived by the faith principle, having no promised support, regular income, nor any desire for them. No doubt this faith life brought him much

suffering as he himself said he was naked, thirsty, hungry, having no certain dwelling place, and laboring with his own hands.

Perhaps the reason Paul's methods have been forsaken is that the cost is too high for the individual. Think of the cost:

- constant travel
- preaching day & night
- no certain dwelling place
- no regular support
- persecution
- training in the churches
- training on the field
- non-professionalism
- working with our own hands
- living simply
- little organization
- no institutions
- churches in houses

Are we willing to pay this kind of cost?

Too long we have thought money could evangelize the world. Money is not the need, but men like Paul, who count not their lives dear unto themselves, who have no love for money or what it buys, but have a driving compassion to reach every soul for Christ now, following Paul in his methods.

CORRECTION AND FURTHER TRAINING

When a local church fell into error, Paul did several things: wrote letters, sent a fellow evangelist to the church, went himself, prayed constantly for the church. This is also how he gave further training to the leaders in the churches.

Missions is a *GOING* business. We go to the lost, not ask or wait for them to come to us. We go to the churches to teach and train, not ask the church to come to us. We go with the evangelists to train them, not send them out to train themselves.

What then about institutions such as Bible schools, hospitals, secular schools, etc.? Quoting a woman with wide experience in India as a missionary to her own people, Ms. B. V. Subbamma says in *New Patterns for Discipling Hindus*: "But everyone must recognize that most institutions which were once regarded as great

channels of evangelistic enterprise have ceased to fulfill that aim long ago."

Even Bible schools are getting farther and farther off center and have become secular, professional, intellectual, philosophical, psychological, materialistic, sociological, academic. Few schools today teach basic church planting. Most concentrate on church pastoring which is really the work of the local church elders.

No need to mention hospitals on mission fields. In many of them the patient would have to beg to hear the gospel. There is always a tremendous need for healing and Paul practiced this, but in connection with evangelism. His constant companion was a doctor—Luke. But again, the doctor must go to the patient, to the churches, and must work hand in hand with the evangelists. The healing hand can soften the heart, but the means often becomes an end in itself. Such is the trend of institutional missions today. The institution becomes the center of the work.

A complete reevaluation and revamp of missions is needed. Our methods? We may have to admit they need to be thoroughly reexamined.

Paul's methods? **THEY WORKED!**

**THINGS
TO COME
MISSION**



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