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President's Line

MULTIPLYING OURSELVES

Multiplication is one of the fundamental laws of life. Everything that grows and reproduces operates by multiplication. An evangelist needs to be a multiplier too. Not only in the number of disciples but he/she should be committed to the task of reproducing his/her ministry in someone else, who in turn will reproduce themselves in a third ministry generation. St. Paul was a multiplier (2 Timothy 2:2; 3:10). He looked upon Timothy with love and confidence as his spiritual son and heir.

Recent interviews and surveys of students in Bible Colleges and seminaries clearly reveal that some are interested in becoming evangelists but there is very little training available for them. FOCE is seeking to launch **Operation Paul** to address this need.

Operation Paul is being designed to be a means of breeding a new generation of evangelists by providing intentional and individualized discipling, mentoring, etc. in an on-the-job and highly relational context. Evangelists will endeavor to stir-up potential, sharpen skills, show the ropes to, and share their life with the aspirants so that the latter can imitate them (Matthew 10:1-7; Luke 5:1-10; 1 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:8; 2 Timothy 1:6, 13).

There could be at least two different formats of how **Operation Paul** can work. An internship program in cooperation with theological training institutions could be officially formalized. The other option is for a private agreement to be drawn up by an evangelist and the potential evangelist. Whatever the format, multiplying ourselves is not an option. Moses invested in Joshua, Elijah in Elisha, St. Paul in Timothy, D.L. Moody in R.A. Torrey and Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman in Billy Sunday. Now it is our turn.

T.V. Thomas

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WHY IS IT SO HARD TO GET STARTED ...?

by Larry Brice

Over the telephone recently, a seasoned itinerant evangelist said he had never seen such a time in his many years when there were so few itinerant evangelists in Canada and the United States.

Then, in conversation earlier today, a veteran of Canadian evangelism told me that when he started out many years ago, there were far more itinerant evangelists in this country than there are today.

Even true blue evangelical denominations like the Christian & Missionary Alliance Church in Canada or the Southern Baptist in the United States hardly ever have an itinerant evangelist come into their churches for a crusade anymore.

Why is this?

The above observations must be true because of the extreme difficulty that I, and also some other evangelists in Canada in ministries like mine, are having in finding ministry opportunities and raising finances. Someone said: "It used to be I would call on ten churches and find two or three invitations. Now when I call on twenty or more, I am lucky to receive one invitation for evangelistic ministry!"

Some of the reasons for this are new. The increased complexity and over-burdened work of the pastoral minister mean they don't have the time or energy to help organize an evangelistic crusade in their communities. Also, with so many congregations running up deficits and annual financial shortfalls, money for evangelistic events gets squeezed out of the budget.

Another factor, which has been growing more and more acute over the last half century, is that many theological seminaries and Bible Colleges have not encouraged students to consider a calling to evangelistic ministry; nor have they provided courses to prepare or interest students in evangelism. Also with the focus more and more on small groups and interpersonal ministry, the schools have lost their love for, and pursuit of "dynamic preaching!" The pulpit has not been prized for excellence in preaching and the art and technique of persuading a mass audience to decide on a verdict for the Gospel has been lost.

What is more recent, and an even more dangerous malaise for evangelism, is that colleges have actually been backing away from even the concept of "conversion," and preaching that is "life-changing." More and more concentration is given to congregational maintenance, encounter groups, drama and liturgical dance -- all which may have great value and a place within worship -- but without the anchor of a powerful lifting up the Scriptures in authoritative preaching.

Maybe, just as we see the local retailers edged out by the conglomerates like Wal-Mart, Zellers and Canadian Tire, and the super-churches that have both the resources and facilities to minister more effectively than the local, small-sized church, the beginning itinerant evangelist cannot compete with the professionalism and financial backing of the well-organized evangelistic organization.

Why should someone go to a stark, school auditorium to hear an unknown evangelist with none of the elaborate stage-setting of a Billy Graham at SkyDome, and none of the talent of stars like Ben Heppner, Michael Smith and D.C. Talk when they can see all this on colour television in the comfort of their own living rooms four different times of the year? Certainly the latter is a God-given and God-used ministry for which we all thank God, but the local evangelist-entrepreneur can only offer a much more limited ministry.

However, some small-operation evangelists are still starting out and finding they are greatly used of God. They find they must have many volunteers to help to do the work of mailing, secretarial duties and in making the ministry known.

And the three factors which Billy Graham stresses in all his crusades, work just as well for the small-scale evangelist as for the mighty -- prayer, prayer and more prayer! The starting evangelist's best weapons in his arsenal for spiritual warfare in his/her field of ministry, is the prayers of as many supports as he/she can muster! The principles for victory haven't changed at all.

And the evangelist starting out may find he/she will have to revive, or even create a new market for evangelistic ministries within their own denominations. To create a market for a new product business calls "missionary work." Can there be any more appropriate term for the work of going out and interesting a sleeping denomination, an over-stressed and over-worked pastor, and an indifferent congregation to the glorious enterprise of making disciples of the nations within Canada -- with a ministry that has its origins in the New Testament.

It certainly worked then!

And when this evangelism of the Bible is seasoned with prayer, launched with vision and maintained by good business decisions, it can work now!

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