Chapter Ten

The Ministry of the Evangelist

The term “evangelist” designates one who announces the Good News. He is a heralder of Good News. There are three direct references to evangelists in the New Testament. We will examine all of them in an attempt to understand the scope of evangelist’s office and ministry.

The first reference is found in Ephesians 4:11:

“And He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers;”

This verse impresses upon us that the office of the evangelist is one of the continuing ministries in the church throughout the Church Age.

In this context we see that the ministry of the evangelist, just as that of the other fivefold ministries, was to be a ministry to the church.The purpose of all of these ministries was to bring the church to maturity by perfecting and edifying the body of Christ. Contrary to popular opinion, the ministry of the evangelist is more to the body than to the heathen. The body of Christ is edified and brought to perfection as new converts are brought in. Therefore the winning of converts is a part of the evangelistic ministry as well as that of all the member of the body of Christ.

The second scripture which mentions the evangelistic ministry is found in II Timothy 4:5:

“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”

Whatever office Timothy held, he was also an evangelist. Thus we see the possibility of the fivefold ministries being merged within one man. This is not necessarily the rule but, rather, is the exception.

Each of the fivefold ministries is to be based in a local assembly. They are not only to work within the setting, but are to be free to work out from the local assembly with whom they are affiliated. Just as each local church needs all nine of the gifts of the Spirit, they also need all five of the eldership ministries mentioned. Since this book is being written more for the benefit of the local church than for the church at large. The point I am trying to make is that the evangelist, just as the other of the fivefold ministries, needs to have a “home” church, for the mutual benefit of the church and the evangelist.

It is appropriate to consider the ministry of the evangelist as an extension of the apostle’s ministry. It may be necessary for an evangelist to stay in a “virgin” area until local leadership is nurtured and set in order. This is very possibly what Timothy was doing at the time Paul wrote to him in I and II Timothy.

The evangelist may not exclusively serve the purpose of pioneering a new work. He may also guard a new flock until it can take care of itself. Timothy may have been protecting the church from false doctrine and division until she was established in the truth and unity of the Spirit (I Timothy 1:3-7; 3:1-13; II Timothy 2:1-2).

At the time Timothy was in Ephesus, the church had been pioneered some few years previously by Paul. Paul had visited the church after his initial pioneering efforts and remained there for at least two years during one these return visits. Certainly, this all shows that Timothy, and evangelist, was no pioneering the church but was setting it in order so that the church would eventually be able to care for itself.

The third scripture concerning the work of the evangelist is found in Acts 21:8:

“And the nest day we that were of Paul’s company departed, and came unto Caesarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.”