

Paul & his fellow Workers

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PAUL AND HIS FELLOW WORKERS

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Paul is an anomaly. His conversion and commission were not according to convention. As a result, he was clearly aware that his position as a leader had nothing to do with any intrinsic worth. Also, he was forever impressed that God sovereignly determines the circumstances and the seasons that mold a man into a leader.

One of the crucial aspects of Paul's formation as a leader was hardship. Authority and influence were earned through suffering. In keeping with that fact, he avoided titles expressing superior rank or intrinsic ability. His powerful influence among co-workers grew out of his competence and years of experience on the front lines.

His long-term fellow workers were those who became believers through him and were influenced by him in their early years as Christians. Loyalty and kindred spirits were born out of Paul's costly investment in their salvation and spiritual growth. These were the people who worked best over the long haul with Paul.

In the course of his ministry, Paul had ten long-term co-workers. He seldom had more than two workers with him at any given time. Oddly enough, his two favorite co-workers, Timothy and Titus, never spent more than fifty percent of their time physically present with him. Team work was more loosely carried out over a certain geographical distance.

As a specially commissioned apostle, Paul was the "boss". Nevertheless, he functioned in such a way as to promote plural leadership working on a consensus basis. His profound influence on the team was not so much because of his commission as it was his greater competence and experience. His failure to arrive at a consensus with Barnabas may signal that personal conviction should not always be subject to team unity.

Paul almost never used rank to gain compliance from fellow workers. He appealed in such a way as to motivate them to make correct choices, however costly. The strength of his appeal came from long years of loyal friendship and a life given to eternal purposes. Paul motivated his partners by his dogged determination to be a pleaser of God rather than of men.

I. THE ODDITIES OF PAUL'S LEADERSHIP

- A. The anomalies in life have a way of making us question established human wisdom and convention. God often prefers to go against the grain as He did in Paul's case.. Paul was an oddity among God's leading messengers.
- B. Paul's entrance into leadership is abnormal.
 - 1. He is abnormally born into apostleship (1 Cor 15:8-10).
 - a. His back door entrance is to squelch any sense of self importance.
 - b. His experience of God's grace gives him conviction that He sovereignly controls even bad circumstances to develop His leaders.
 - 2. He is given time to mature apart from other leaders before doing pioneer work. Mature leadership demands that one pass through various stages in life.
- C. Paul's commission is centered on suffering and not fame (Acts 9:15-16). Hardship and not popularity is Paul's defense for his legitimacy as a leader.
- D. Paul's authority and influence as a leader come not from positional rank but from competence, experience, and hard work.
 - 1. His use of titles shows avoidance of leadership by position or office.
 - 2. Powerful influence comes by remaining on the front lines.
 - 3. Paul does not withdraw from the work to administrate his fellow workers.

II. THE KIND OF PERSON THAT WORKED BEST WITH PAUL

- A. Those who bring us to Christ and have the greatest input in our lives as new believers leave an indelible mark on us for life. This is an important factor in Paul's choice of co-workers.
- B. Observations about conditions surrounding the formation of Paul's missionary teams
 - 1. Unfavorable and stressful working conditions discouraged the mediocre workers from continuing on with Paul. Mission agencies today, perhaps mistakenly, try to remove stressful circumstances from new recruits.
 - 2. Paul's mobility allowed him to leave behind malcontents.
- C. Paul's approach to team work evolved through the years.
 - 1. He began with equally experienced Jews influenced by apostles in Jerusalem.
 - 2. He moved to an inexperienced racial mixture of people influenced by his own evangelistic work.
 - 3. He ultimately had ten long-term workers. Only one had been somewhat influenced by apostles in Jerusalem.
- D. Partnership was developed in the midst of turmoil.
 - 1. Co-workers saw Paul pay a heavy price for their benefit. This resulted in a deep seated loyalty to him.
 - 2. Co-workers shared Paul's perception of spiritual subtleties.

III. PAUL'S SUCCESSES AND FAILURES AT TEAM WORK

- A. Partnerships in the work of Christ are too often idealized. They require great investments of emotional energy and they can be quite painful, because partnerships remind us of how difficult we are to get along with.
- B. Some basic statistics about Paul's partnerships
 - 1. Only ten workers out of a total of forty-one worked with Paul long term.
 - 2. Paul's association with a long term worker may have covered anywhere from fourteen to twenty-five years.
 - 3. Nevertheless, no fellow worker spent more than fifty percent of his time physically present with Paul.
 - 4. Seldom were there more than two men with Paul at any given time.
 - 5. Paul's two favorite co-workers were seldom themselves together with Paul at the same time. In other words, they seldom worked as a trio.
- C. The implications of the statistics in Paul's team work
 - 1. Team work is complicated when members are married.
 - 2. Team work does not mean always being physically in the same geographical area.
- D. Paul's form of plural leadership
 - 1. His partners were treated as equals
 - a. His titles showed no rank.
 - b. His use of "we" showed consensus.
 - 2. His greater competence and experience gave him greater influence.
- E. Paul's "failure" with Barnabas
 - 1. Team unity is not to be placed above conviction.
 - 2. Moral strength depends upon a leader making a costly and unpopular choice to separate when necessary.

IV. PAUL'S LESS THAN MODERN APPROACH TO
MOTIVATION AND INFLUENCE

- A. There is a trend afoot today for Christians to adopt the motivational methods of the business world. These methods are based on surveys of the top CEOs and rely mainly on inspirational techniques. Accordingly, motivational leadership is something to be learned through seminars and books.
- B. Paul's method of motivation is well illustrated in Philemon.
 - 1. He makes his request public to cause Philemon, as a leader, to think about the public consequences of his actions.
 - 2. He reminds Philemon that his request grows out of years of hard experience and selfless service. Therefore, his request is not superfluous.
 - 3. He causes Philemon to feel the pull of loyalty by reminding him of the debt owed him as a long-time friend who brought him the gospel.
 - 4. He tells Philemon that his request is in keeping with a high standard of ethics.
 - 5. He leaves room for Philemon to act according to personal conviction which ultimately is determined by God.
- C. Paul's final words to Timothy do not match those of the positive visionary.
 - 1. He warns Timothy with examples of disqualified co-workers.
 - 2. He calls Timothy to imitate not innovate.
 - 3. He invites Timothy to suffer rather than soften the message.
 - 4. He appeals to Timothy to look into eternity.

6. CATEGORIZATION OF ITINERANT WORKERS

Long-term Itinerant	Medium-term Itinerant	Short-term Itinerant
Aquila Aristarchus Erastus Luke Mark Priscilla Timothy Titus Trophimus Tychicus	Apollos Barnabas Epaphras Philemon Silas	Achaicus Andronicus* Artemas Brother (1) Brother (2) Clement* Crescens Demas Epaphroditus Epaenetus Fortunatus Gaius (1) Gaius (2) Jason Jesus/Justus Junias* Lucius* Onesimus Onesiphorus Phoebe Secundus Sosipater Sosthenes Stephanas Urbanus* Zenas *Itinerant status not certain

Workers Who Became Deserters

Name	Place	Description	Text
Hymenaeus	Asia (?)	Rejected faith Went astray from the truth	1 Tim 1: 20; 2 Tim 2:17
Alexander Phygelus	Asia (?) Asia	Rejected faith Turned away from Paul	1 Tim 1:20 2 Tim 1:15
Hermogenes	Asia	Turned away from Paul	2 Tim 1:15
Philetus	Asia (?)	Went astray from the truth	2 Tim 2:17
Demas	Thessalonica (?)	Deserted Paul Loved present world	2 Tim 4:10
Mark	Jerusalem	Deserted Paul	Acts 13: 13; 15:38

I. THE ODDITIES OF PAUL'S LEADERSHIP

My youngest daughter is named Tamin. Tamin is a Hebrew word that means perfect and complete. We wanted to see her grow to be complete and perfect in Christ. She was born with a number of physical and mental anomalies, none terribly serious. The first thing I noticed was that when she cried, her lips pulled to one side. The nerve that controls the muscle around one side of her mouth was not functioning. I thought that the problem was on the side where her mouth drooped. But later I learned that the problem was just the opposite. The side that seemed normal and did not droop was actually not being pulled by the muscles to balance her smile and her crying."

Tamin's many anomalies have forced me to rethink what is normal, attractive and valuable, and to sharpen my judgment about what counts for all eternity. The anomalies of life have a way of making us question what we have always accepted as established human wisdom or convention. They tend to remind us that God prefers to go against the grain. As Paul put it, "He chooses the things that are not (the anomalies), that He might nullify the things that are (human convention).

Paul himself is an anomaly. He does not fit the pattern. He is a misfit. He throws things out of kilter. He does not follow convention. And as a result, he forces us to question even the accepted normal Christian wisdom about leadership.

Think about it. Is it not an enigma that the twelve apostles provided little leadership for the extension of Christ's message into the world? Is it not even more odd that they were not the ones to elaborate on the implications of Christ's message for the church? Yes, Peter and John did contribute to the New Testament letters concerning church life, but they do not compare to the volume and influence of Paul's writings. Why would not the Twelve who lived and learned from Christ be the ones to leave the greatest mark on the early beginnings of Christianity? There had to be some reason for going against the norm. The anomalies are meant to intrigue us and to capture our attention. They bait us. They tempt us to think about the small subtleties that often make big differences. Let us consider some of the oddities in Paul's development as a leader.

Paul knew that his entrance into the work of Christ was all backwards and said so in 1 Corinthians 15:8-9. Untimely born. Abnormally born. Literally, he was an abortion, or as some say, a stillborn, or miscarriage. Some believe that figuratively it meant that he was a freak. Others say that as a miscarriage, he was a failure, or as a premature child, he was in need of development. It is best to understand Paul as saying that he was abnormally born

into his role as an apostle alongside the Twelve who were normal and conventional.

There was nothing normal, natural, or typical about Paul's conversion or induction into leadership for the mission to the Gentiles. There has got to be some point to all this. Perhaps there are two reasons for God's rather unconventional approach and choice.

The first reason is perhaps given in 1 Corinthians 15:9. "I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle." He would never be allowed to nurture feelings of importance. There was no red carpet treatment for Paul. He came in the back door. He was *not* a rising star being groomed for great things. If his departure from Damascus was any indication, he often had to go unceremoniously out the back door (Acts 9:25). He would *never* be an insider in the Jerusalem circle of *Who's Who*. Jewish skepticism about his genuineness would hound him to the grave.

As if all that were not enough, he was given a mid-course reminder, a thorn in the flesh, to extinguish any faint possibility of considering himself to be a distinguished, popular first class spokesman for Christ. A sense of self-importance would never creep in. The best leaders may not fit the pattern. They may not come up through normal channels. They are prevented from being included in the good ole boys club with its attendant political attitudes.

The temptation to think that our success is the result of intrinsic ability is tremendous. I often find myself contemplating the good things that have come out of my work in Mexico. I was able to leave each work with a fairly strong group of elders in a short period of time, whereas my colleagues often struggled for years to raise up any solid leadership. In my sinful moments, I said to myself, "It is because I am a man's man. I attract men because they sense I know where I am going. They feel my confidence and leadership abilities." It is absolutely disgusting the pride that effortlessly seeps to the surface. God so worked in Paul that he could never entertain thoughts like mine.

The second reason is found in 1 Corinthians 15:10. "By the grace of God I am what I am." He would not just simply carry a message of God's grace but rather, because of the way he was converted to Christ, he himself would *be* the message of grace. Ultimately, Paul believed because he was chosen to believe. Psychological studies on Paul's conversion argue that he was already on his way toward believing when Christ confronted him on the Damascus road. They try to explain away God's apparent disrespect for Paul's free will. But Paul understood clearly what had happened. He would always carry with him a strong sense of God's sovereign intervention and imposition over men's wills. This would encourage him to believe that God moved circumstances, even unpleasant ones, to form him into the leader he was.

I have found that I have an incredible ability to reconstruct God's past sovereign dealings with me. My mind deceives itself into taking credit for the way things turned out. I now taut the benefits of involving one's son in men's meetings rather than youth meetings. My son Cabe was changed into a spiritually mature young man as he watched men who were new believers discuss passages in the Bible and relate how their lives did not match up. He heard the interaction between twelve growing Christian men as we ate dinner after the meetings. All of that is fine. The disturbing part is that I am inclined to state it in such a way to give the idea that it was all a result of my wisdom and parenting skills, when actually, it had nothing to do with me. It was God's sovereign working of circumstances. There were no youth. My thirteen year old son asked me if he could attend the men's meeting. In the Mexican culture, children are much more freely included in adult situations. The combination and timing were perfect. It was God's design through and through, and my propensity to reconstruct events to claim the glory is very unlike Paul.

Now that leads me to a related point. It takes time, substantial time, for us to learn from the circumstances God puts in our lives to produce the right kind of leader. Paul was intelligent and skilled as a leader since he says that he was advancing beyond his contemporaries. Nevertheless, it was another thirteen years before he began to do aggressive pioneer work and altogether fifteen years before he clearly became a leader of leaders. This issue is seldom given proper attention. There is no short cut to competence. Seminars and D.Min. studies will not speed up the process. We have to pass through various stages in our lives. There is something about growing older that opens men's eyes. Time sharpens our perspective and we can look back and see what was human centered and did not last. With fewer years to live we become more aware of what will have eternal value and what is faddish.

When I was younger working on my Master's thesis, I wrote on the private use of speaking in tongues. I wanted something controversial. I wanted to get to the bottom of the issue and solve all the difficulties. I was naive enough to think I could become an expert on the issue. Almost twenty years later, I worked on my Th.D dissertation. I was by then a different person. I had seen the inner workings of organized Christianity and was no longer naive about the way popular Christian leaders can lose direction. I was more experienced, having been involved in various stages of starting new works in Mexico. I had held the top leadership position within the country and had taught in seminary over twelve years. As a consequence, I purposely avoided a controversial area or a topic that would be narrow and technical. I had less energy, and wanted something that would feed me, teach me, change me, something that would give me wisdom and discernment to deal with subtleties. What a difference twenty years can make. We cannot bypass the stages of life in leadership development. We cannot

speed things up.

It took time to make Paul a leader and it also took suffering. That is why God makes hardship a part of his commission in Acts 9:15-16. Paul's commission is most odd. "I will show him how much he must *suffer* for My name's sake." That is a very strange beginning. He was not told how many healings he would perform or how many books he would write or how many thousands he would convert to Christ. And furthermore, God did not ask him if he would accept His ministry proposal. Paul has no choice in the matter and there was no glorious incentive. Why was this suffering imposed upon Paul as part of his commission to be a leader of the Gentile Mission work? For one, hard things are all part of God's way of developing character for leadership. They test a man's trust in God to use the terrible things for his good. About some twenty years ago, something very difficult happened to me that I never expected. For a few years I tolerated the results of that situation, sure that time would correct the problem. Then for about ten years I fought thoughts of "This is unfair. I deserve better than this." Finally, I realized that I probably would go to the grave never able to resolve the thing. The hard part is that I never will know for sure why God determined to bring such a hardship my way. But I have finally decided that I would never have become who I am today without it. It is part of growing up. It is part of submitting to God's purposes. Leaders have to lead in every area, even in the area of trusting God while in pain.

There is another reason for why suffering was imposed upon Paul in his commission. When his motives or his genuineness were attacked, Paul never referred to his healings, his thousands of converts or his fame. On the contrary, he referred to his sufferings and he noted that he had no choice in the matter of his ministry and that he personally had nothing to gain from his work.

It is normal for us to speak of our accomplishments as the reason we should be given a hearing. When my authority is questioned, I tend to say, "I have two masters and a doctorate. I have planted five churches, taught in seminary and developed leadership at the church level for many years." I can remember in particular a young man speaking at Western years ago. I will never forget him, because he raised his hands and faced his palms outward to express what Professor Jones had said was a sign of confidence. He prefaced what he said by the number of conferences he had given at youth gatherings. That is the normal way.

Paul was an anomaly. The three times he was forced to give a defense of his legitimacy and genuineness, he gave what are called catalogues of hardship (1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 6:3-5; 2 Cor 11:23-30). For Paul, true leadership and authority was gained by demonstrating that he had absolutely nothing personally to gain from what he was doing. His suffering proved his pure motives and authenticated his commission from Christ. Oddly enough, his claim to leadership was

that he was not popular, he enjoyed no perks and he was not eloquent, not a crowd pleaser.

This very same attitude toward leadership is reflected in his use of titles. He avoided titles of position preferring titles which pointed to his suffering and hard work. Curiously enough, he never called himself nor any of his colleagues pastor. Best, a liberal scholar, was going to title his series of messages *Paul the Pastor*, until he realized that Paul never used that title of himself. He called himself a teacher and preacher only twice. He avoided designations which might attribute to himself some intrinsic superior skill or personal accomplishment. Likewise, he avoided titles which might distinguish himself from his fellow workers or imply that he was first in command. Whatever title he used of himself, he used freely with his co-workers.

His authority and influence as a leader was not tied to titles of position or office but rather to his competence, his experience and hard work. It is therefore no wonder that his favorite designation was that of a worker or fellow worker. To describe his gospel work, he used the same two words (εργον and κοπος) that he used for manual labor. He did not use terminology that elicited respect, honor, and privilege that go with being a college professor or the CEO of a business. His terminology was blue collar.

Paul taught that submission was required of a wife no matter what the character of her husband. Citizens were to submit to a less than honorable government. Employees were to submit to bosses that were unfair. Submission was expected based solely on the other person's position. But he never asked for submission to leaders in the church because of their position as leaders. Submission was forthcoming because of a leader's hard work and character (1 Cor 16:15,16; 1 Thess 5:12-13; 1 Tim 5:17). "Be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work (συνεργω) and labors (κοπιω)." "Appreciate those who diligently labor (κοπιω) among you." They deserve esteem because of their "work (εργον)." Elders deserve double honor when they work hard (κοπιω).

Biblically speaking, respect, influence, and power is not based on educational accomplishments nor upon positions gained. It is based upon remaining in work that has no privilege, no perks and no personal fame.

This is where I learned a hard lesson about influence when taking on leadership roles in an organization. I thought that I would have more influence as I took the role of director over the missionary body in Mexico. And, superficially, I did. I had more direct touch with everyone and my advice and ideas were given a greater hearing. Many changes were instituted. But quickly I realized that the changes were at best superficial and temporal. There was accommodation rather than a change in conviction. As long as I was present, I could prop the new system up, but I

realized everything would go back to the way it was once I was gone. The true influence that had lasting effect upon others was based upon my competence and my character. Only those who observed me up close in a new work could see who I really was. Only they saw me at all hours of the night dealing with unbelievers. My influence was most powerful when my example could be observed. By removing myself from that work, I was unwittingly weakening my authority as a leader. That is why we need to fight the temptation to go on the seminar circuit and give conferences to large crowds. Our fame may grow but true powerful influence diminishes. Conferences can tend to entertain and stimulate temporarily. But effective influence in making leaders like ourselves with our convictions can only be accomplished as they observe us working over a good period of time. They have got to see it in our dealings with all sorts of people in different situations. Teaching with anecdotes is good, but there is nothing like teaching by doing it.

There is a trend afoot to be the CEO who shepherds only the under shepherds and thus is no longer truly involved with the *hoi polloi*. He maintains some direct contact with the congregation but usually only with the significant people, those with clout in the church. Some think this is based on Christ's model, but a closer look shows that when He sent out his disciples, He himself did the same work as his disciples (Matt 11:1). Likewise, Paul's model is explicit. His influence was so powerful because he never became simply an administrator over other workers. There is something lost in removing oneself from the dirty work.

The problem here is one I heard my parents often discussing. They were both career school teachers. There always seemed to be a struggle between the teachers and the administration. My parents felt that the administration did not have the heartbeat of the classroom since they were no longer involved directly with the students.

This same complaint arose constantly on the mission field. Those at headquarters were attending seminars on how to run mission organizations as a good business. Policies were made in a state-side environment. Usually the outcome was that we had more paper work to do. There was a loss of trust. Many complained, "They are out of touch with our lives." So then home office would plan more trips to the mission field to improve communication. But the real solution was to have top leadership still involved in the same work as those over whom they served.

Every time Paul referred to himself as a model to be followed ("imitate me"), without fail he referred to his suffering, humility, or hardships which arose from his continued involvement in pioneer work.

My dear Tamin. I would not have chosen to have a Tamin. But God in His sovereign love chose to put a chink in the image of the perfect family. She was an anomaly to teach me about what is important in life. Alright, you, the expert on leadership, learn to lead this little one. As I contemplate that little life with all sorts of defects, I often wonder if we have not lost our way with all of our education and technology. What would Paul think of all the time and money spent on leadership seminars and conferences on world evangelism? Perhaps we have lost the power of simplicity. Perhaps we need to compare what is conventional wisdom with the oddities of Paul's leadership.

II. THE KIND OF PERSON THAT WORKED BEST WITH PAUL

Psychological studies show that children's personalities are formed by the time they are six to eight years old. Their early experiences mold their values and their perceptions of themselves. It is no wonder then that our spiritual lives are often marked by our early experiences as believers. Those who talked to us about Christ and those who taught us or guided us in those first few years as a Christian leave an indelible mark on our lives.

I became a believer at the University of Oregon and soon attended Campus Crusade for Christ meetings but I never went to church. Can you believe that? I never attended church until I came to Western. As a result, I received almost no teaching. The greatest influence in my life came from another source. I just happened to buy a book entitled *Grace* by Lewis Sperry Chafer. That book captivated me and I bought other books by Chafer. Those books forever marked me and set me on a path to a seminary that would teach like Chafer did.

In his book on *True Evangelism*, Chafer warns against demanding some public action in connection with conversion, such as standing or going forward. He was critical of any actions to hasten a person's decision and to secure visible results. Because of what I learned from him, I have always avoided the common practice of saying, "We had twenty professions of faith." I never talk about a person having believed in Christ until the person's words and actions demonstrate true belief. Chafer's concerns about abuses in evangelism made their mark on me.

The first Christian radio program I ever heard was J. Vernon McGee's "Through the Bible." I almost did not stay tuned because of his small-town Texas drawl. I was hooked by his frankness, his lack of super spirituality when discussing his ordeal with cancer, and the simplicity of his Bible teaching.

Fellow seminary students sometimes made disparaging comments about McGee and Chafer: "They were not real scholars. They did not do serious exegesis." As I struggled with my colleagues' assessments and my loyalties to McGee and Chafer, I found the pull of early influence to be surprising.

This dogged loyalty to those who early influenced us for Christ is a crucial principle or concept in understanding Paul's selection of long-term fellow workers. But before we turn to Paul's powerful influence on his co-workers' spiritual growth, I would like to make a few observations to help give broader context to the formation of Paul's missionary team.

First, his rather unfavorable working conditions discouraged the mediocre from continuing on with him. If a worker had a change of spiritual attitude, he dropped away. Mark discontinued his travels

and returned home (Acts 13:13). Five workers quit the team in Asia (1 Tim 1:20; 2 Tim 1:15; 2:17). And Demas dropped out under heavy pressure near the end (2 Tim 4:10). Paul did not have to waste time dealing with the half-hearted. All who accompanied Paul had to work at various times to support themselves as did Paul. Opposition was fierce at times and travel was not first class.

It is rather strange that today most mission organizations wish to remove all the stress so as to avoid the loss of new recruits. Stress is removed by assuring recruits of financial security. They then have to raise incredible sums of monthly support to live decently, to travel with ease and to have computers for the best of communication. Unwittingly, we may be allowing the mediocre to become our fellow workers. The natural consequences of Paul's hardships weeded out those enamored with the idea of serving Christ but were unable or unwilling to take the stress.

Secondly, Paul's mobility tended to be a convenient way of leaving behind any malcontents. They simply did not continue on. For most of us who are in established churches or institutions, we do not enjoy Paul's advantage. We often must suffer through rather trying and frustrating working relationships. I say this so as to inject a little realism into our rather fuzzy and idealized application of Paul's team work to our situation today.

When I assumed the position of director over the work in Mexico (60 missionaries), the missionary body had grown rapidly in a short period of time. I wanted to foster a team spirit. I soon realized that the older and more experienced missionaries were not interested in team spirit. They just wanted to be left alone to do what they had always done -- work independently. The newer ones being sent to Mexico were not coming because of knowing me or because of their admiration for the way we were church planting. In fact, they came with their own ideas about how things ought to be done. They were going to show us how to do demographic studies, work in teams of three couples with differing gifts, be creative, and have reproducing churches within three years.

After many long hours over many long months of talking, debating and arguing about how to create a team spirit, we had little energy left to actually evangelize. Church and seminary staffs face the same problem. An organizational team often slowly comes together and some who may be problematic are entrenched forever.

Obviously Paul avoided many problems we face today by simply being mobile and working under stressful conditions that naturally excluded the problematic people. Still Paul did not have his concept of team all worked out from the beginning. There was a natural evolution in the makeup of his team as he grew older and more experienced.

The first team was formed by mutual consent, not by Paul's initiative. It was 100 percent Jewish. Barnabas had the same work experience as Paul. Both Barnabas and Mark had stronger ties to the apostles in Jerusalem than to Paul.

Although they worked as equals, Paul does take more initiative (Acts 13:13-16). This pattern is repeated in Lystra (Acts 14:11-12). The people of Lystra actually considered Barnabas to be superior as the god Zeus but they saw Paul as Zeus' spokesman, Hermes, because he took the initiative to speak for the two of them. Paul no doubt was by personality more aggressive than Barnabas. But it is also very probable that Paul had the gift of leading. As a result, Paul takes more initiative but he was not *the* leader. Paul did not foolishly consider himself superior because of his gift of leading. And Barnabas was not jealous of Paul's abilities and did not attempt to squelch Paul in order to assure strict equality in the team. Nevertheless, this working relationship was not long-term. It all ended rather abruptly.

The second team to be formed shows a distinct transition in personnel. This time, Paul chooses his workers. No one is sent to work with him nor is the team formed by mutual consent. Paul chooses Silas (Acts 15:40). Although Silas is a Jew tied to the apostles of Jerusalem, he has less experience than Barnabas and therefore, naturally assumes less leadership. Paul alone (without Silas, Acts 16:3) chooses Timothy a Jew-Greek with no ties to the apostles in Jerusalem. Timothy is very young and a new believer from Paul's influence in Lystra. In Acts 16:10, the "we" indicates that Luke is also added to the team. Luke is most probably fully Gentile and a convert of Paul's at Troas or possibly from Antioch. The Western text has "we" in Acts 11:28, indicating that Luke may have known Paul from his days in Antioch.

Paul now has a racially mixed group with only one person with ties to the apostles in Jerusalem. The majority are Paul's converts and all have less experience in the work than Paul. Interestingly enough the only one in this group not to work with Paul long-term is Silas, a man whose early Christian experience was not influenced by Paul.

This transition from experienced Jews tied to Jerusalem to inexperienced Gentiles tied to Paul is completed on the third missionary journey. He adds seven more workers, three are Jewish and four are Gentile. All are the results of his own evangelistic work. There were in all ten long-term partners that worked in close association with Paul up to the very end. Only one of the ten was not a convert or early disciple of Paul's. That was Mark. He was the only one with ties to the apostles in Jerusalem. No doubt his youthfulness and inexperience made him compliant to Paul's influence.

It would seem that Paul's most loyal and effective co-workers were those who came to Christ or were greatly influenced in their early Christian experience under Paul's teaching. Is this just coincidence? Possibly so, but it is highly unlikely.

Now there is another element related to what we have just seen, which contributes to the harmonious partnerships Paul enjoyed. In most cases, his co-workers saw the great price Paul paid to bring them the message and to teach them. Paul's evangelistic and discipleship efforts often occurred under very conflictive and hard circumstances. Timothy saw Paul stoned in Lystra (Acts 14:19-20; 16:1) and Titus saw Paul stand firm for him in a tense situation before the *Who's Who* in Jerusalem (Gal 2:1-5).

A few years back I found myself confronting a very difficult situation. I believed that a very highly respected professor in another country was slowly but surely drifting from the historic doctrinal perspective of the mission. After a period of confrontation and a great deal of tension, it all was coming to a head. Some privately would encourage me, stating that they were glad I was speaking to the issue. At that point, a friend in a high leadership position and with almost thirty years experience as a missionary and professor, publicly put all of his reputation and long-time friendships in the mission on the line to back me up. It was like Paul standing with Titus. His stand was potentially very costly. I was at once and forever indebted to him. This is the kind of co-worker Paul attracted to himself because of the high price he was willing to pay to bring them to Christ and to defend them.

Now there are some who can gather followers and co-workers based on their charismatic personality and giftedness. People are drawn to a winner. The drawback to this situation is that such co-workers tend to be somewhat fickle over the long haul. Since most of us are not so highly gifted, what can we do to draw loyal partners to ourselves? The kind of partnership Paul produced requires time, experience, and a heavy investment. As seminary graduates we are inclined to want an immediate and enthusiastic response to our teaching, our strategy and to our leadership. We fail to recognize that in the beginning, we normally are working with people who are experienced, are tied to others who influenced their early growth, and who have not seen us under fire. We have made no investment yet in their lives.

I can remember having just such a youthful attitude while working in Querétaro. Art, the man who started the work there was a jovial, older evangelist. He had a heart attack after one year there, so I moved to Querétaro to continue the work with a group of about fifteen people. I thought, in my weaker moments, that after a year there the people would look to me as perhaps a more competent leader and teacher. They liked me, but I could tell by the way they talked about Art that there were deep emotional bonds

there. He was older and more experienced and had made a greater and more costly investment in their lives. It is unsettling to look back and see how presumptuous and shallow my thinking was. We all want the glory without waiting and without experiencing any pain.

The men who worked best with Paul were his converts and early disciples. They were also kindred spirits which is to be expected, since their first and often only example was Paul. It was not just his teaching but his attitudes, discernment and ethics which influenced them.

According to 2 Corinthians 8:16-17, Titus has the same earnestness, the same feel or intuition as Paul. And ultimately, it is God-produced, God-determined. There is no training program that can produce that kind of partnership. In 2 Corinthians 12:17-18, we see that Titus conducted himself in the same spirit and same steps as Paul. Titus leaves the same footprint, the same ethical impression. The same is true of Timothy (Phil 2:19-21). He is a kindred spirit. Literally, he has an equal soul or mind. Some translate it soul-mates. Timothy can read the subtleties in people's attitudes. He can read between the lines. That is why Paul sends him to remind the Corinthians of his "ways" (1 Cor 4:14-17). Paul's "ways" include both doctrine and attitudes or perspective. Many can sign the same doctrinal statement, but they have a different approach to the application of truth. They read certain situations differently. They have a different attitude about the spiritual life and they may be less troubled by certain issues. Can you imagine how misperceptions on the part of Timothy and Titus would have changed the whole thrust of some of Paul's letters? He would have been addressing the wrong issues. They had to be able to see beyond the superficial and get to the heart of the matter.

When I was in college, I was convinced I had found my soul-mate. The Campus Crusade for Christ leaders at the University of Oregon were leaving the organization. They were explaining to the students why they were leaving to begin the third expression of the church. The traditional church was lifeless and not reaching unbelievers. Crusade was reaching unbelievers but was too authoritarian and restricted. According to them, there needed to be a new expression of the body of Christ. This was an unsettling time for all of us as new believers. After the meeting, I walked a girl to her dorm and asked her what she thought of the meeting. She said that she could not put her finger on it, but something troubled her. There was a disturbing element of spiritual pride. Her observation struck a cord deep inside. We were too immature to articulate our observations, but we had the same mind or soul. She became my wife and co-worker for life. I do not have to explain to her every feeling I have about a given situation. She automatically picks up the same signals. Deep and lasting trust is the result. It is indispensable that a long-term partner perceive

the world about them in the same way. He or she must interpret the subtleties of life with the same accuracy.

Some may be troubled by this method of choosing partners. Does this not lead to having "yes-men" surrounding us? Where is the diversity to keep us healthy? There is a trend today to encourage diversity of biblical views within a given team to avoid an ingrown environment. For Paul, diversity was to be found in personality and gift but never in doctrine or practice. Timothy was to remind the Corinthians, both by his teaching and conduct of Paul's way, which was the same in every church (1 Cor 4:17). To be effective he had to have the same conviction, ethics and practice. He could not arrive in Corinth offering various options, claiming that they were all equally valid.

In conclusion then, what kind of person worked best with Paul? Probably Timothy and Titus represent Paul's most effective long-term team workers. They both were younger than Paul and both became believers through Paul. Both saw Paul pay a high price for their best interests. Both had discernment like Paul's. They read churches and their spiritual health through Paul's eyes. That is why his letters were right on target. From a distance, he was able to zero in on attitudes, as well as doctrinal deviation. They were soul-mates with Paul.

I have found that my most faithful and loyal co-workers have grown out of situations of turmoil, conflict, or great upheaval emotionally. They are rare opportunities to show conviction under great heat and pressure. It is God's sovereign way of using pain to draw out those with like convictions about Christ.

In San Luis Potosí in the early stages of beginning the new work, we began to have weekly Bible study with two sisters and their husbands, Rodrigo, a construction worker and Adrian, a head waiter. Within two months they all had believed in Christ. Rodrigo began to visit family members with whom he had not spoken in years. His ten brothers and sisters, all immoral and conflictive, were impressed with the change in him. Four months after becoming a Christian, he fell onto rebar sticking up out of the concrete. One entered the back of his head. The doctors at an antiquated, government hospital ignored the family for twelve hours. Nothing was being done for Rodrigo. I was able to get a private doctor, a specialist, to come and look at him. He was brain dead . . . no hope. Then came the attacks. "See, this happened because he was unfaithful to the Virgin, and he was studying with those *gringos*." We had to deal with superstitious, irate and drunk relatives for five days in that smelly and inefficient hospital. Death finally came and there were arguments over whether mass should be offered. At the wake, we were going to sing hymns. "Unheard of" was the complaint. I had to travel ten hours through the night to drop off my daughter and another girl to work with a medical caravan. I returned for the funeral at a dusty un-cared-for cemetery. Chaos

is the only word to describe the whole situation. I stood on a mound of dirt, holding up Rodrigo's Bible. He had written, "I believed in Christ March 7, 1990." Over the wailing, I explained what that meant. All week Adrian had been watching me as I, a stranger among them, attempted to stand for the truth which Rodrigo had embraced and his family worked to destroy. He saw me caring for conflictive relatives, incapable of loving each other. He saw me constantly fighting back tears for a man I had only known six months. In the midst of chaos and emotional trauma, he had a glimpse of the Christ-like fiber that can bring purpose and peace in the midst of confusion. Adrian tearfully expressed his sense of indebtedness. That week a co-worker was born. God sovereignly provided the painful means by which to make us soul-mates. That week a forever friend was born.

III. PAUL'S SUCCESSES AND FAILURES AT TEAM WORK

My wife Pam and I have been married twenty-six years. She is my friend, confidant, and my partner in the work. She has home schooled our three children and raised them to be sincere committed believers who actively work with us in starting new works. Although not gifted as a teacher, she teaches the women and accompanies me on our evangelistic Bible studies, sometimes five nights a week. She sits next to me, putting her arm on my leg. Often we have stopped after a study at a cafe for coke or coffee and french fries to talk about our impressions of how a particular couple was responding to the gospel. I have never had a friendship with anyone else like what I have with my wife. There are very few couples who are as like-minded as we are.

Nevertheless, we must periodically struggle to maintain our good working relationship. I would like to have people over all the time for meals. My wife thinks our lives are busy enough as it is and once a week is plenty. She dares me to bring in a third party to give their opinion. True partnership is not easy nor automatic. It requires great investments of emotional energy and of humility. Partnerships are painful because they remind us just how difficult we are to get along with.

I am not sure that I am the most appropriate person to address the issue of team work since I have not always enjoyed success in this area. Nevertheless, I have always been committed to plural leadership and I always will be, because I believe it is biblical, not because I think it is the most practical way. Many have experienced disappointment in their attempts at team work because they enter into it with unrealistic expectations. Paul's experience is insightful and encouraging.

Most Bible students are aware that Paul almost never was alone and that he most often worked with a number of other men. But few have given much thought to how he actually worked together with others.

It may be surprising that over all Paul worked with a total of forty-one itinerant workers. Yet only fifteen of those worked with him for any significant time. Only ten worked with Paul, maintaining considerable contact with him up until his death. Those ten friends worked with Paul for a minimum of fourteen years and a maximum of twenty-five.

Most of us probably already had some idea of these facts just presented. But few know just how much time Paul was physically present with each of these co-workers. The chart that follows will help give us a more realistic view of the inner workings of Paul's long-term partnership over the course of his ministry. The

years of service in this list are derived from Hoehner's chronology. The time of service for each worker is a general approximation and is not to be taken as an exact figure.

Person	Years Associated	Years Together	Percentage of Time Physically Present
Titus	25	13	50%
Timothy	19	9	50%
Luke	18	6 1/2	30%
Aristarchus	11-17	6 1/2	30%
Aquila and Priscilla	17	4	25%
Tychicus	14	4	25%
Trophimus	14	2	15%
Mark	20	2 1/2	10%
Erastus	16	2	10%

It is rather surprising that no fellow worker spent more than fifty percent of his time physically present with Paul. Team work did not always mean being together in the same city. It is actually possible that the most trusted fellow workers were delegated difficult tasks in other cities and thus spent less time with Paul. Luke and Aristarchus are high on the list for time spent with Paul, but they were not necessarily doing pioneer work. Most of their time with Paul was spent in prison.

There is another aspect which is often overlooked. Paul seldom had more than two of these men with him at any given time. The following chart will give us an overview of the number of workers Paul had with him at any particular phase of his mission work. When Paul was not actually involved in pioneer work or he was settled in one city for an abnormal amount of time, I have given the name of the city in parenthesis.

Number of Persons with Paul	Length of Time with Paul	Names
2	3 months	Barnabas, Mark
1	1 year/2 months	Barnabas
1	7 months	Barnabas (Antioch)
1	1 month	Silas
2	2 months	Silas, Timothy
3	4 months	Silas, Timothy, Luke
2	5 months	Silas, Timothy
2	1 month	Aquila, Priscilla
4	1 year/6 months	Silas, Timothy, Priscilla, Aquila
2	6 months	Timothy, Titus (?) (Antioch)
13 (off and on)	3 years/6 months	(Ephesus)
8-11	1 month	(Trip to Jerusalem)
10 (off and on)	2 years	(Imprisonment in Rome)
1	6 months	Timothy
1	1 year	Timothy
5 (off and on)	4 months	Timothy, Tychicus, Artemas, Apollos, Zenas
3 (off and on)	1 year	Titus, Erastus, Trophimus
8 (off and on)	6 months	(Imprisonment in Rome)

The average number of partners Paul had at any one time was two, but he often had only one co-worker present with him. The curious thing in all this is that Paul's favorite co-workers, Timothy and Titus were seldom together with Paul. The three can be put

together only a few times for a total of a few months. There was no long-term necessity to meld together the various personalities.

What are the implications to be drawn from these facts? The concept of a number of couples working together for a long period of time in one city is not exactly parallel to Paul's situation. There is nothing anti-biblical about changing the number of fellow workers nor the amount of time spent together. Still, Paul's example may present us with a few precautions. Remember, the context here is that of itinerant, full-time workers and not local leaders.

Team work is complicated when there are married members. If you have three couples, that means six co-workers. Over a short period of time that may work well, but over the long haul difficulties can arise. The men may complement each other well, but the wives and children drastically multiply the number of interpersonal relationships. Marriages operate differently and the discipline of children widely varies from one family to another. These factors can often lead to unwanted tension within the team. We may inadvertently be overlooking the fact that by marrying, we already have one fellow-worker, and we often are sufficiently occupied adapting ourselves to our marriage partner. As our children grow, they soon become fellow workers as well. It is possible that we have undervalued the role a family may play in forming its own team.

The best solution for many, in light of Paul's approach, has been to work together more loosely, at times separated geographically. In Mexico, some of the best team work has been done by four or five couples living within one to three hours of each other. They continuously invite each other to help in their area of expertise and often work together on joint campaigns or projects. They get together often for fellowship, prayer, and planning, but there is some space maintained between them. It is possible that this scheme is what big church staffs are implementing. In such cases, there are essentially small churches within the big church and each staff member has his own area of responsibility. The staff members seldom overlap each other's areas. Likewise, elders in smaller local bodies are fairly well occupied in their own businesses and do not have a great deal of time to spend in ministry where they might overlap each other.

All of this is not to discourage us about team work, but is meant to inject a little realism into the whole issue. Paul's teams usually consisted of one or two others, and they were not physically present with him for long periods of time. Furthermore, they were usually younger, unmarried converts of his who only knew his way of doing things.

Now we need to move into another facet of team work. How did Paul actually work with his fellow workers when they were together? He

obviously established plural leadership in the churches he founded (Acts 14; 1 Tim 3; Titus 1) both at the beginning and the end of his ministry. I am aware that some wish to deny this fact by explaining that there was one elder over each small house church, and there were many house churches in a city, giving a plurality of elders within each city. The argument is basically speculative and driven by the desire to promote the more traditional way of having one man as the head of a church. Paul very clearly promoted a plurality of elders in each congregation. But did he operate this way within his own team while church planting? This is a complicated issue because he was an apostle given special authority to start new works among the Gentiles. He was the "boss." And yet within his circle of co-workers, he almost never pulled rank but rather treated everyone as his equal. He set an example of how plural leadership ought to function.

First, if you will remember from the previous message, he never reserved a title for himself alone. There was no attempt to distinguish himself from his co-workers as we might today when we use qualifying phrases such as "senior" and "assistant" to distinguish between pastors. Sometimes we might say that a certain person is the pastor and other leaders are elders or deacons. In contrast to our modern use of titles, Paul used designations which showed his partners were of equal value in the work (1 Thess 2:6; 3:2). Even the designation *apostle* is shared with his workers in the sense that they were all messengers. He was uniquely commissioned but did not make that an issue by calling himself the *senior* apostle.

Second, he used the first person plural to show consensus (1 Thess 2:18; 3:1-4). There was no distinction between his will and that of his fellow workers because he can say in verse 5, "When *I* could endure it no longer *I* also sent to find out." He assigned to his partners the same feelings, the same logic and the same productivity in the work. In fact, he sent Timothy, a convert of just two years and a worker of only a few months, to encourage the Thessalonians to withstand opposition. He also relied on Timothy's observations there to make a response to issues within the Thessalonian church. That is surely treating others as equals.

Third, Paul seldom had to override his fellow workers' decisions. In Acts 21:10-14, Paul's age, experience, and special commission were given preference. In the end, his partners allow Paul's convictions to take priority. On the other hand, there are cases where Paul gives preference to a fellow-worker's contrary opinion (1 Cor 16:12). Paul and Apollos agreed on the need for a trip to Corinth but disagreed on the timing. Paul apparently was persuaded by Apollos' logic and feelings on the matter.

These passages show that, although Paul had special authority, he operated on the basis of plural leadership, seeking consensus. Still, as the older, more experienced team member, he naturally and

rightly was given preference in the decision making process. This is a crucial subtlety in plural leadership. Too often we tend to one extreme or the other. Some want what is called the point man, the mover and shaker, and the visionary to be the head of the team. Such a man may demand to be the CEO, with clear lines of authority drawn. He expects respect based on his gift, his education, and his business savvy. Quite frankly, this is often a weak man who is unable to submit to anyone else.

Many seminary graduates in my generation were attracted to the concept of plurality until they got involved in churches. They felt held back by the elders. Their ideas and training were not properly appreciated. So they decided that plurality was impractical. The real problem is that most of us do not want to wait for respect. We are unwilling to build a good reputation over the years and cultivate our authority based on proven character. We prefer authority based on position or education.

At the other extreme, some want absolute equality despite disparity in age and experience. They are unwilling to give preference to the one who has proven his ability and character over the years. They are intimidated by anyone with the gift of leading and jealous of any special attention given to any particular individual on the team.

Plurality of leaders should avoid both extremes. There can be equality and, at the same time, deference shown to those who are more experienced. The only reason it may not work is that humility and spiritual maturity are often in short supply.

It might be nice to think that Paul's approach to leadership and partnership would be immune to conflict. But we know that this is not the case. And so we have the rather disturbing case of an irreconcilable difference between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-40). Many suspect that Paul erred in the split-up of the first Gentile Mission. He appears to be quite inflexible and unforgiving. After all, a year and a half had passed since Mark had failed them. Furthermore, Paul seems to indirectly admit his error later when he speaks positively of Mark and his contribution (2 Tim 4:11). Since we moderns have a strong and growing distaste for intolerance, Paul is increasingly seen as the bad guy.

Luke would have had trouble with that assessment. The words he used in Acts 13:13, "He left them" and 15:38, "He had deserted them" are almost always used in a negative sense referring to unfaithfulness. In the Septuagint, the one word is almost a technical term for religious apostacy. According to Luke's terminology, Mark's action was no minor failure. Furthermore, after the team split (Acts 15:40), Paul was committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. Then Luke highlighted Paul's achievements in the rest of Acts. All of this indicates that Luke found no fault in Paul's obstinacy with Barnabas.

We may inadvertently overlook the fact that Paul had just recently confronted Peter about withdrawing from the Gentiles at meal times. Since Barnabas had joined Peter in that incident, no doubt, it was rather disconcerting to Paul. Also, we may forget that Mark was Barnabas' cousin. Would it not be natural for Paul to question Barnabas' objectivity in defending a relative? Paul considered Mark's failure so serious that one and a half years was not enough time to prove himself to be a changed man.

There are times when team unity must be forsaken for one's convictions even in non-doctrinal areas. It is possible to make an idol out of Christian unity. Paul's decision to separate from Barnabas (after seven years together) is a warning signal to us that sometimes the price for unity is too costly, and we should not pay it. Paul separated, still able to consider Barnabas a respected brother in Christ. One's partners need not be considered carnal or heretical in order to separate from a mission, a school, or a church. Paul separated from Barnabas over an issue of principle and yet could still consider him a brother in Christ.

How does this apply today as team members of an organization or of an established church? As I studied these issues of team work for my dissertation, I felt a disturbing tug on my conscience. As a team leader, had I been flattered by being considered even-handed, level headed, and not so black and white as some? Was I seduced by leadership positions into being more of a pragmatist and a diplomat? At that time, there was a serious issue afloat, and in my carnal moments, I considered not speaking out so as to gain more respect. I reasoned: "With higher leadership positions, I could deal better with the problem. To speak too forcefully to the issue might jeopardize future leadership positions." I was aghast at how politically oriented my thoughts were. Paul's example encouraged me to give more serious consideration to being faithful to biblical principle and conviction. Sometimes compromise is unwarranted.

Spurgeon, upon separating from the Baptist Union said, "Complicity with error will take from the best of men the power to enter any successful protest against it."

IV. PAUL'S LESS THAN MODERN APPROACH TO MOTIVATION AND INFLUENCE

When I was a new Christian at the University of Oregon, I went to a conference to listen to a speaker from Peninsula Bible Church. He invited me down to Palo Alto for the summer to work and attend the church and hear Ray Stedman teach. I got a job with a big company, working in the receiving department where a good part of the job was driving fork lift. One day the supervisor said half to himself, "For this job I need a really proficient fork lift driver. Oh hey Bard, you are just the man I need for this job." Did that motivate me to work harder? Of course it did. I thought to myself, "They are recognizing my contribution to this job." A few days later, I heard the same supervisor say the same thing to another worker. What a fool I was to be so easily flattered. It was just a gimmick to make people feel good about themselves and to motivate them to work harder.

In all the books on leadership in the business world, there is always a chapter on motivation. How can we *empower* employees and make them feel significant, part of the team? How can we make them take ownership for their jobs and capture the vision the leadership has? Many times their suggestions are universal, proverbial insights into motivating people. Still, these books always leave me with the uneasy feeling that the bottom line is manipulation hidden behind upbeat slogans: "Celebrate the victories. Publicly recognize achievement. Teach people to say 'yes, and' rather than 'yes, but.' Nothing is impossible. Reach your full potential." A sense of team is to be fomented in creative ways. For example, Levi Strauss has its management work every so often on the plant floor packing pants and shipping them off. This allows leadership to understand the workers' world and the workers feel taken into account. As a result, everyone works better and more contentedly.

Basically, business motivation techniques can be learned at a seminar or by reading a book. It dismays me to see the same approach being taken up by Christian leadership books. After reading these books, I realized that in the past, these same methods were employed by certain Christian leaders to motivate those of us in that organization. I was being motivated by empowerment techniques learned at business seminars. Quite frankly, it is difficult not to feel just a little duped.

Contrariwise, Paul's method of motivation was not based on something learned at seminars. Paul's "technique" required many years to develop, and it cost him dearly, much more than the usual two hundred dollar seminar fee. Furthermore, it was not developed by taking surveys of successful leaders.

Before we proceed to examine Paul's approach to motivation and influence, it might be helpful to define what the word motivation

means. It means to incite, impel, or to provide motive for acting according to one's will, usually when the person is not naturally inclined to carry out a given action. The key then is to understand how Paul can move or incite others to freely act in keeping with his will.

One of the most intriguing insights into Paul's powerful influence as a motivator is captured in his letter to Philemon. It is here that we see most clearly Paul's avoidance of commands when dealing with his fellow workers. He rather appeals to them, hoping to gain their compliance through logic and reason. We shall now study that reasoning process as Paul seeks to gain Philemon's willing acquiescence.

First, Paul sets the stage by making his request public. The letter is addressed both to Philemon and the church (Phlm 1-2, 25 ὑμῶν). Everything is out in the open. There is no secretive communication to protect Philemon's ego. There is no private letter to hide from the public the possible tensions that could be created by Paul's request. This public letter forces Philemon to face the fact that his decision will affect the work in Colossae, though it may seem to him to be a personal business matter. There are public repercussions for a leader's decisions. The church is observing his conduct as a pattern to be followed. The Colossian letter has just been read to the church. In it Paul has said, "Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven" (Col 4:1). Philemon feels the weight of the example he will be giving as a believing master. Leaders cannot separate their private matters from their public role. They are to be motivated by thinking of the precedent or example they are setting.

Second, Paul reminds Philemon just who it is that is making this request (Phlm 8-10). The request comes from an old man who is a prisoner of Christ. With regard to his being the prisoner of Christ, Paul, in so many words, says, "I am no armchair general, no untried, impractical idealist. I make no superfluous requests based on a scholar's 'theological reflection' or self aggrandizement." Ultimately, he is not a prisoner of Rome but rather of Christ. He is suffering because of obedience to Christ. It is Christ's sovereign will that he be in prison. This is proof that he is genuine. He has God's approval rather than man's. Philemon is to be motivated by realizing that the request comes from a man not given to thinking of his own welfare. Paul is not given to trivial matters. Philemon is being motivated both by the purity of Paul's motives and the importance of the matter to Christ's eternal purposes.

Paul *never* alludes to his great accomplishments as reason to trust him as God's spokesman. His successes are never used to motivate others. He always points to his hardships as proof of being a worthy spokesman for Christ. It is the lack of popularity and

prosperity that, ironically enough, give him powerful influence with Philemon. Christ Himself taught that popularity was not a good sign. "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for in the same way their fathers used to treat the false prophets." Paul uses his imprisonment as proof that he has not chosen to be popular. In so many words, he is saying, "I am genuine, Philemon. My request, like most of what I do, may not be popular, but it is sincere and serves Christ's interests."

Paul also refers to his age. It is true that old age makes every hard circumstance worse. But it is not so much that he is an old, decrepit man that deserves coddling. The point is that he has been hard at work a long time and even in his older age, he has not removed himself from the fray. He has not softened or toned down his message or weakened his resolve over the years. He has not changed his message to make life a little easier.

Can we make the same claim as we age? The trend today seems to be headed in a different direction. I have numerous friends and acquaintances from seminary days who have not maintained their convictions with the same fervency. Now if they had adopted a less popular view or a more narrow interpretation, they should perhaps be applauded, even if we are not in agreement. But in most cases, my friends have taken a broader, more popular stance within Christian circles. Their approach to doctrinal issues is now more friendly to the culture and provokes less opposition. Paul had not adjusted his message one iota as he grew older. He did not, for the sake of unity, narrow his beliefs to a core of convictions to die for and leave the rest up for debate. Even secular writers on leadership recognize the value of constancy and reliability. In the book *Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge*, the authors note that people prefer a leader with whom they disagree but is always the same, rather than a leader they may politically agree with but periodically changes his position on certain issues.

The third approach Paul uses to motivate Philemon is to remind him of their relationship over the years. They are brothers (Phlm 1), fellow workers (Phlm 1), partners (Phlm 17), and are like father and son (Phlm 19). Philemon is indirectly made to calculate the investment Paul has made in his life. As he considers the great debt he owes Paul, he cannot help but feel the tremendous tug on his sense of loyalty. This approach to motivation requires years of cultivating a faithful friendship.

In Mexico, I taught at Puebla Bible Seminary for thirteen years. There were times when I was asked for constructive criticism. My suggestions were not always implemented, but normally they were given serious consideration because of the personal investment I had made to the seminary over the years. I drove or took a bus for twelve of those thirteen years to teach my two week modules (four times a year, often eight hundred miles round trip). Because of being involved in a new church planting situation, I usually

returned on the weekend between classes to teach the group. I never used the right each missionary had to charge the seminary for travel expenses. This long-term personal investment and sacrifice gave weight to my requests. It was an account built up over the years on which I could draw to make my appeals more persuasive.

We have seen that Paul's motivation depended on a long-term loyal friendship. It also depended upon genuineness and sincerity, proven by long-term hardship for Christ. There were no gimmicks, no power of positive thinking, no flattery, no inspirational homilies, no pretended friendship, no offers of reward or promotion.

A fourth element in Paul's motivation of Philemon was to remind him that his requests were based on an ethically pure foundation. In particular, Paul never benefitted financially from his dealings with others (Phlm 13-14). To have kept Onesimus would have been expecting Philemon to pay, because he would have been losing income in Onesimus' absence. Furthermore, Paul would pay any financial loss (Phlm 18) even though Philemon owed Paul (Phlm 19). Paul went *beyond* what are normal or conventional ethics. This became a powerful motivator because everyone owed Paul, and they knew his motives were pure.

When I look at Paul's desire to go above and beyond conventionally accepted ethics, I wonder what we are to make of modern Christian leadership. I read in *U.S. News and World Report* about a popular Christian movement among men. The report was quite favorable, but one little detail was disconcerting. It was said that millions were made on the t-shirts and coffee mugs sold at their meetings. Now there is nothing wrong per se in that. But compared to Paul, it seems to lack dignity. It does not build the same level of trust and loyalty. It is amazing how the inclusion of one small detail can leave a little bit of doubt about a good organization's motives.

The curious element in all of this, of course, is that Paul has the authority to demand obedience, but he refuses to resort to pulling rank on Philemon (Phlm 8). The reason for not using his position to demand acquiescence is given in Philemon 14. He wants Philemon's compliance to grow out of his sense of love (Phlm 9), friendship (Phlm 17), a sense of service (Phlm 20) and out of goodness (Phlm 14). He wants Philemon to be convinced that it is the right thing to do. He does not want to rob Philemon of the joy of deciding to do what is upright and principled. This was the same principle Paul expressed in 2 Corinthians 9:7. Forced obedience does not allow the person to demonstrate the genuineness of his actions. His motives are suspect if he has been obligated. There is no value attributed to an action carried out under compulsion. Paul knows that God looks at the intentions of men's hearts (Phil 1:15-17). Therefore, he believes that his work will be in vain if his fellow workers are moved to obedience for the

wrong reasons.

Paul makes his appeal with logical reasons but leaves the final impetus to God. God, not human manipulation or pressure, must convince a man to respond to the appeal. Only in this way can personal conviction be developed and given depth. Otherwise, when Paul is no longer present, the person will return to taking the easy road.

It is not too unlike a parent dealing with his children. The child may be obedient, but the reason given to friends for not doing something is, "My dad will not let me." That is praiseworthy, but a parent wants his child to get to the point of saying, "I will not do it because I'm convinced that it is wrong for these reasons." The child has then internalized his parent's conviction and understands *why* such conduct is unacceptable.

Today there is a growing inclination to make the leader's visionary powers the key to motivating and enthusing people to take hold of a certain task. There is a premium upon being positive, making people feel good, being forward looking, and making things fun. A true leader visualizes the future. The visionary leader gets people excited about setting goals and making a strategy to accomplish great things. He has a sense of where trends are headed and plans to meet the needs of tomorrow.

One Christian writer has said: "The real issue is how the church and the parachurch in the nineties and the next century will handle the torrent of change. Those who handle it poorly will, most likely, not survive the nineties, but those who handle it well will make significant advances for the Savior. (*Vision for Ministry in the Twenty-first Century*, Aubrey Malphurs). He goes on to say that such a leader must be a voracious reader, keeping himself on the cutting edge of culture, trends and changes. He must be intuitive to meet the changing needs of people. He should read books by marketplace visionaries like Lee Iacocca, Ross Perot, Mary Kay and Steven Jobs. He says that "The visionary leader possess an uncanny sense of being on to something big for God." People love to align themselves with someone popular, someone who is going somewhere.

The modern leader motivates fellow workers to carry out his wishes by appealing to his ability to plan for the future, his intuition, his grasp of information and cultural trends, his innovative style, his awareness of people's felt needs, and the uncanny aura that he is going to do significant things for the Savior. In so many words, people are drawn to a winner.

As usual, there is a lot of good to be said about the concept of the visionary. But is this really a biblical quality that is key to leadership? I wonder what Paul would have thought if he could have perused the modern literature on visionary leadership in the last months of his life. Would he have had second thoughts about

his own leadership ability and about the advice he was giving his co-workers? Would he have doubts about the motivational quality of what he wrote to Timothy?

Maybe he was a little too negative when he said to Timothy, "You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me." "Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me." "Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm." "At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me" (2 Tim 1:15; 4:10, 14, 16). Does this sound like a winner who motivates people to accomplish significant things for the Savior?

Maybe he was being too narrow and inflexible when he said to Timothy, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth." "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me and entrust them to faithful men" (2 Tim 1:13; 2:15). Does this sound like an appeal to gather information on future trends and to be culturally astute? After all, information is power. Does this sound like advice to look for visionaries and innovators to carry the message into the future? Even a secular writer with a measure of discernment can see through the vanity of being an information collector. Bennis says, "We worship this information and are dazzled by it more than we use it, and it is often more impressive for its sheer bulk than for its real value. We have more information now than we can use. . . The true measure of any society is not what it knows but what it does with what it knows." (Bennis, *Why Leaders Can't Lead*).

Perhaps he was not presenting a very forward looking strategy when he said to Timothy, "Do not be ashamed, suffer hardship with me" (2 Tim 1:8; 2:3). Is this a very positive or fun approach for motivating men in ministry?

Paul is certainly less than modern in his last letter to Timothy. For him, influence and motivational power come from years of being principled rather than pragmatic. A principled man motivates others by setting the example. He has no hidden agenda; it is all out in the open; he has proven his unbending conviction under hardship over a long time; he has invested faithfully in long-term friendships and thus people are indebted to him; he goes higher than the normally accepted level of ethics; he avoids manipulation in order to allow God to be the final or ultimate cause in bringing conviction. In so many words, he motivates others by being a man with his eyes fixed on eternity, not on the cultural conventions of the day.

The pull to acculturate is so strong that Paul motivates Timothy by pointing off into eternity (2 Tim 1:8-9). "Timothy, do not bend to popular and cultural influences that are fleeting. God had you in mind, Timothy, before there was any culture. And he purposed by His grace to rescue you from this world and to make you a leader.

Do not be distracted Timothy by what is so popular in this short-lived culture. Your treasure is eternal."

There I was, a college drop-out, fired from my job at the grocery store. I was on the reefs of Guam, sitting on my surfing board, feeling the warm water around my legs, concerned about the shape of the next wave coming in, worried about the knobs on my knees. "Was I starting to look like a genuine surfer? I wonder what the tide will be like in an hour." My eyes blink and there I am on the high desert of Mexico in a dusty cemetery standing on a mound of dirt, holding up a Bible, speaking a foreign language, concerned that Rodrigo's family and friends hear about his belief in Christ. God, through many difficult circumstances, had sovereignly and purposefully changed my concerns and my eyesight. This new vision with its focus on eternity now determines my character and my conduct.

What motivates those who work with us? Quite simply, it is character. It can be seen in the eyes. . . a dogged determination to live with eternity in mind. Do we have forever eyes? "Forever eyes, they never tell lies. Forever eyes. You never have to compromise when you have forever eyes." (Song sung by Twila Paris.)