

SOME STRATEGIES FOR A GLOBAL CHURCH MINISTRY GLEANED
FROM PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY
IN ACTS 18:23–21:6

by

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ASMS	American Society of Missiology Series
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>BibSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCC	Crossway Classic Commentaries
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
<i>EBC</i>	<i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>
<i>EMQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Missions Quarterly</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
LPS	Library of Pauline Studies
<i>NAC</i>	<i>New American Commentary</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

In our day, one of the *nicer* things said about the institutional church is that it is ‘irrelevant.’ The book of Acts carries the remedy. Whether you are young and virile with Superman-like energy, or restless with what you have seen of a dull, ho-hum, business-as-casual Christianity, or at the age where you are receiving birthday cards that say things like ‘When it’s time for a dental checkup, do you send out your teeth?’ the message of Acts is for *you!*¹

So writes R. Kent Hughes as he embarks upon his study of the book of Acts. When individuals want to learn about global church ministry, most often turn to the book of Acts for guidance, direction, and principles to be gleaned—and rightly so! But in today’s culture, the world of global missions is in dire need of a biblical revolution. Before he left the earth, Jesus commanded his disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19–20).² Later in the first century, the Apostle Paul expressed his determination: “And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation” (Rom 15:20). Then, at the end of Paul’s life, he wrote to his predecessor Timothy and commanded: “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2). The mission remains in effect as there are still those who have not

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 13–14 (emphasis original).

² All English scripture citations, unless otherwise noted, come from the New American Standard Bible (1995 updated edition).

repented from their sins and turned to Jesus Christ alone in saving faith. This is the reason missions remains. For this reason, the book of Acts proffers some helpful principles to aid the local church in ministering effectively cross-culturally.

Purpose of the Paper

Many have written on the Acts of the Apostles and the missionary “methods” gleaned from Paul’s journeys.³ But the purpose of this paper is to specifically highlight Paul’s third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:6) and observe how Paul and his companions ministered the gospel of Jesus Christ to sinners. Flemming has written that “the apostle Paul—missionary, theologian, interpreter of Scripture—is undoubtedly the key figure for an understanding of the process of doing contextual theology in the New Testament . . . as he addresses the diverse situations of his mission communities.”⁴ The goal, then, of this study is to understand the areas of ministry that Paul highlighted while on his journey to then see how the church today can incorporate some ministry principles to be more effective in preaching the gospel to the lost, discipling and training new converts, and equipping them to then be teachers in their own villages and cities.

The methodology of this paper can be found in the following outline. First, the paper will examine both the context of the book of Acts at large with some basic introductory issues and then the specific context of Acts 18–21. Second, the content of Acts 18–21 will be observed so the flow of thought and progression is clearly understood. Third, following on

³ See Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2008); Roland Allan, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1962); Paul Barnett, *Paul: Missionary of Jesus*, After Jesus, Volume 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2008); Paul Bowers, “Church and Mission in Paul,” *JSNT* 44 (December 1991): 89–111; Constant Fouard, *Saint Paul and His Missions*, trans. by George F. X. Griffith (New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1906); Joseph A. Grassi, *A World to Win: The Missionary Methods of Paul the Apostle* (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Publications, 1965).

⁴ Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 16–17.

the footsteps of the content section, this section will highlight some global ministry techniques and principles that Paul employed. Fourth and finally, the end of the paper will suggest a few practical implementation strategies for utilizing these methods in global ministry within the context of the local church.

Limitations of the Paper

Because of time and space, this paper will primarily focus on Paul's third missionary journey as found in Acts 18–21. All of the stories in the first, second, and fourth (=the Roman) journeys are omitted not because of importance but because of space. Moreover, a full-fledged commentary cannot be found here as that is not the specific intent of the paper. Doubtless the paper will provide some comments here and there, the thrust of the paper closely scrutinizes Paul's third journey so as to deduce where Paul spent a bulk of his time and energy. Some applicatory principles will then be helpful. Additionally, a thorough treatment of the introductory issues of Acts cannot be offered in the body of the text but the reader is encouraged to pursue the relevant footnotes to find ample information on these various issues.

Presuppositions of the Paper

No one can write a paper of any kind without presuppositions—it's simply impossible. For that reason, the presuppositions of this paper will be revealed. First, the Bible is the word of God and it is fully inspired, authoritative, and inerrant in all it contains and affirms (2 Tim 3:16–17; 2 Pet 1:20–21; Ps 19:7–9; Ps 119:86, 89; Matt 5:18). Second, the accounts in the book of Acts are in fact historical and not mythical tales or fancy fables.⁵

⁵ Joseph Fitzmyer recognizes that “the major problem that confronts any interpreter of the Acts of the Apostles today is the historicity of the Lucan account” (*The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB [New York: Doubleday, 1998], 124). These skepticisms have stemmed from the interpretations of Conzelmann, Dibelius, Haenchen, Lüdemann, Pervo, Vielhauer, and other skeptics.

It is, in the words of W. M. Ramsay, “a work of history.”⁶

Third, not everything in the book of Acts is normative for today. Interpreters should glean principles and application from Acts but it is impossible to demand that the way the early church functioned, grew, and “did ministry” as revealed in the book of Acts must be the standard for church ministry today. Alva McClain remarks: “Actually, what we have in the book of Acts is a record of events in a period of history which is transitional in certain important respects. Hence, while every portion of Holy Scripture is ‘profitable for doctrine,’ we shall find in Acts some events which are unique . . . never being intended to serve as a permanent norm for the church of the present age.”⁷ With that said, all Scripture is “profitable . . . for training in righteousness” (ὠφέλιμος . . . πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ) and thus it behooves the exegete to keenly observe Paul’s emphases as he endeavors to “proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called [believers] out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9).

Fitzmyer then affirms: “One has to admit that at times Luke’s information is faulty and that he has confused some things in his narrative, but by and large he does present us with a reliable account of much of what he recounts.” (ibid.). However, Longenecker writes: “Though many scholars of late have criticized the historicity of Acts, of great significance in bringing about a more positive attitude toward the reliability of Acts during the later part of the nineteenth century were the works of J.B. Lightfoot, Theodore Zahn, William M. Ramsay, and Adolf Harnack—four very different scholars whose work in concert tended to support the historicity of Acts” (Richard N. Longenecker, “The Acts of the Apostles,” in *EBC*, 12 vols., ed. by Frank E. Gaebelin [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981], 9:209); cf. David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 23–25.

⁶ R. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 1.

⁷ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1974), 390.

CHAPTER 2
CONTEXT OF ACTS 18–21

The Context of Acts

The “theme within Acts highlights a characteristic of God: the God of Acts is a communicator and a missionary—God reaches out to speak to people in his word, the gospel message, in order to introduce them to Jesus and lead them to salvation.”¹ Perhaps the key theme in the book of Acts at large may be noted in the phrase: “God’s expansion of His Church” or as Walton writes: “the expansion of the gospel.”² Kent Hughes states: “One reason I love to study the book of Acts is its uniqueness. It is *the* sourcebook for the spread of early Christianity. Without it we would know little about the apostolic church except what could be gleaned from Paul’s epistles. It is the chronicle of the spreading flame of the Holy Spirit.”³ As will be seen, the book of Acts is, in the words of John Calvin, “a kind of vast treasure.”⁴

Most commentators agree that the same author of the Acts of the Apostles is one and the same with the author of the third Gospel.⁵ Scholars near unanimously agree that Luke

¹ Steve Walton, “The Acts – of God? What is the ‘Acts of the Apostles’ All About?” *EvQ* 80, no. 4 (2008): 303.

² *Ibid.*, 299.

³ R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 13.

⁴ John Calvin, *Acts*, CCC (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995), ix.

⁵ Perhaps these two writings circulated together as two parts of one complete writing (see Richard N. Longenecker, “The Acts of the Apostles,” in *EBC*, 12 vols. ed. by Frank E. Gaebelein [Grand Rapids:

authored these books.⁶ His writing and style is classified as some of the most polished among the New Testament (NT).⁷ The book can be dated to roughly the mid 60's but certainly before AD 70.⁸ Acts proves invaluable for the student of the NT because it is, in essence, the only document we have of the birth, growth, and spread of the early Church in the first century. Polhill concurs: "Acts is unique among the New Testament writings that deal with the life and mission of the Christian community in the age of the apostles."⁹

Acts could neatly divide into two major sections: chapters 1–12 highlight the ministry in and around Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria whereas chapters 13–28 emphasize the ministry far and wide into other regions of the world. But this paper adapts the simplified outline which stems from Acts 1:8: "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth:"

I	Acts 1–7	Witnessing in Jerusalem
II	Acts 8–12	Witnessing in Judea and Samaria
III	Acts 13–28	Witnessing across the Earth

Zondervan, 1981], 9:207). For further introductory issues, consult Paul Hertig and Robert L. Gallagher, "Introduction: Background to Acts," in *Mission in Acts: Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context*, ASMS 34, ed. by Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 1–17.

⁶ C. K. Barrett writes: "from about AD 200 the tradition presents (until it is confronted with internal evidence) no problem. Most ecclesiastical writers were agreed, and few were disposed to dispute with them, that the Third Gospel and Acts were written by the same author, who was Luke, the companion of Paul" (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Acts of the Apostles*, ICC, 2 vols. [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994], 1:30 [see Barrett's discussion on authorship, 1:30–48]).

⁷ See Johannes Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles: Introduction, Translation and Notes*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1967), xxv-xxviii.

⁸ See Longenecker, "Acts," 9:236–38.

⁹ John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 20.

Focusing on the third missionary journey of Paul casts this study into the third division of the book of Acts as Paul and his companions travel far and wide to minister the gospel to peoples and regions that have not heard the message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The Context of the Missionary Journeys

Acts 13 begins with the church gathered together in Antioch. The Scriptures declare that the believers were “ministering to the Lord and fasting” (13:1) and, while this was taking place, God sovereignly set apart two men for the work to which God called them (13:2). Obediently submitting to this call from God, the church prayed, fasted, and laid their hands on these men and sent them away to do the work of the Lord (13:3). David Doran summarizes: “This passage makes it clear that God’s Spirit is the ultimate Agent in calling out missionaries. It is the Spirit who makes it clear that Saul and Barnabas are to be set apart for the work of missions (v.2).”¹⁰ There is an inseparable link between the Divine calling and the ecclesiastical affirmation in these verses. Doran continues: “God is certainly the ultimate Agent in the sending process, but He works through the local church. In this sense, the church serves as a mediating agent in the sending process. In other words, it is the church that confirms the call of God and consecrates missionaries for their task.”¹¹ Thus began what would be known as the first missionary journey.

This first journey brought these men into serious opposition to the gospel of Jesus Christ. While in Pisidian Antioch, Paul entered the synagogue and began to give a “word of exhortation” (13:15) and preached a lengthy sermon saturated with the Jewish Scriptures proving that Jesus is, in fact, the Messiah (esp. 13:32–39). Although Jewish opposition

¹⁰ David M. Doran, *For the Sake of His Name: Challenging a New Generation for World Missions* (Allen Park, MI: Student Global Impact, 2002), 163.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 164.

followed as they began “contradicting the things spoken by Paul and Barnabas” (13:45), those who believed were “rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed” (13:48). But this persecution and tribulation proved to be precisely what Paul and Barnabas expected. As they traveled throughout the regions and preached the gospel everywhere they went they were “encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying, ‘Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God’” (14:22).

After traveling throughout the region of Pisidia and Pamphylia they came to Antioch from where they were sent and they reported to the believers “all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles” (14:27). This report back to the sending church was crucial for a number of reasons: (1) it provided a needed respite for Paul and Barnabas from the hostile and aggressive opponents of the gospel; (2) it encouraged the church as it recognized how God used these two individuals who were raised up and sent out from the congregation; and (3) it reminded the believers that God is a global God and not just the God of the Jews only (cf. 14:28).

Because some men had come to Judea and began to teach that men must be circumcised according to the Law of Moses *in order to* be saved, a council at Jerusalem was in order. The Scriptures testify that this was such an important issue to resolve that “the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter” (15:6). The heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ was being slandered by false teachers. They essentially advocated a gospel of salvation by works rather than a gospel by grace that saves someone (cf. 15:9–11). After concluding that both Jews and Gentiles alike are saved by grace through faith apart from any works whatsoever (15:9, 11; cp. 15:24; Gen 15:6; Gal 2:16), the disciples returned to Antioch

and gathered the believers together and remained there teaching and preaching the word of the Lord (15:35).

The second missionary journey inaugurated when, after some unspecified length of time, Paul said to Barnabas “let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are” (15:36). The second missionary journey was one of encouragement and follow-up. True believers always endure and this is precisely what Paul and Barnabas wanted to verify among those to whom they preached on the previous journey. A sharp dispute between Paul and Barnabas resulted in the men going their separate ways which, in the sovereignty of God, provided two missionary journeys at this time each in a different region in the world (15:38–41)! Paul began his journey to visit the churches established on the previous journey and while in Lystra met a young man named Timothy who would become one of his closest protégés in the ministry (16:1–3).

While traveling, Paul had a vision of a man begging him to travel to Macedonia and preach the gospel so Paul, obedient to this vision from God, voyaged to Neapolis, the port city of Greece (16:11). They then progressed to Philippi where God used them in remarkable ways for His glory and for His Church. The Scriptures recount the conversions of Lydia (16:14–15), the Philippian jailer (16:30–34), and some Jewish and Gentile folks in Thessalonica (17:2–4). Yet again, persecution arose because of jealous Jews therefore forcing Paul and his companions out of Thessalonica. After traveling by night to Berea they began teaching the believers there from the Scriptures (17:10–15).

After some time, the believers in Berea sent Paul by boat to Athens. Shortly thereafter, Paul sent for Silas and Timothy who had remained back at Berea to join him in

Athens (17:15). While waiting for them, he walked through the massive and pagan city of Athens with the many statues, god and goddess figures, and altars. Ramsay writes:

As Paul wandered through Athens, the interest in its monuments and its university was soon overpowered by the indignation roused by the idols with which it was crowded. In this centre of the world's education, amid the lecture-rooms where philosophers had taught for centuries that it was mere superstition to confuse the idol with the divine nature which it represented, the idols were probably in greater numbers than anywhere else in Paul's experience. Though he was only waiting for the message to go back to Thessalonica, and resume the work in Macedonia to which he had been called, yet indignation would not let him keep silence during the short stay which he anticipated in Athens. He began to discourse in the synagogue, and to hold Socratic dialogue in the agora with any one whom he met.¹²

He spoke in the synagogue in Athens and the philosophers led him to the Areopagus so everyone could hear this "new teaching" (17:19–21). After proclaiming to these pagan philosophers the existence of a transcendent and sovereign God, Paul called them to repent and believe in the one whom God has sent to judge the world in the future appointed time (17:30–31). A few men and women believed the message Paul preached and then he departed Athens for Corinth. The hub of Paul's ministry during this second journey existed in this city of Corinth. He remained here a year and six months teaching and preaching God's Word (18:3–4, 9–10). Leaving Corinth, he proceeded to Ephesus to drop off Aquila and Priscilla (18:18–21).

¹² W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 239.

CHAPTER 3

CONTENT OF ACTS 18–21

The Departure

“Paul was the first missionary to take the ‘light of the gospel’ westward into the Greco-Roman world, into the provinces of Anatolia and Greece.”¹ But at the beginning of each missionary journey, as was becoming Paul’s normal custom, after he returned from a missionary journey he would remain with the local church in Antioch “for some time” (cf. 15:35, 36; 18:23). Though Luke omits to reveal the length of respite Paul had in Antioch with the believers one cannot help but notice the brevity of the account. It almost seems as though Luke desires to write about all that God is doing through His servant Paul around the world that he quickly skims over his reports back to the home church in Antioch that sent him off on the journeys. Regardless, Paul knew God wanted him to travel to the regions already covered to follow-up and see how they are and he knew that God desired that he go even further with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul departed from his sending church in Antioch and “passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening the disciples” (18:23).² God called Paul to depart yet again and immediately he obeyed. Paul sets an

¹ Paul Barnett, *Paul: Missionary of Jesus*, After Jesus, Volume 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 199.

² This it is true to say that Paul revisits previously established locations to “encourage the Christians” (cf. Acts 18:19) (Stephen J. Pettis, “The Fourth Pentecost: Paul and the Power of the Holy Spirit, Acts 19:1–22,” in *Mission in Acts: Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context*, ASMS 34, ed. by Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007], 250).

example for believers in the Church age to imitate as God calls individuals to global ministry.

John Piper writes:

There are hundreds of strange and radical things God is calling his people to do in the cause of world missions. Not everyone will hear the same call. Yours will be unique. It may be something you never dreamed of doing. It may be something you have only dreamed of doing. But I urge you to listen to the leading of the Spirit to see where “outside the camp” he may be taking you “to bear the reproach he endured.”³

The Ministry

One must familiarize himself with the text of the third missionary journey so as to see where Paul traveled and how he ministered the gospel of Jesus Christ in a global context.

Each of the primary cities in which Paul ministered will be briefly surveyed.

Ephesus

The first episode on the third missionary journey surprisingly occurs without one mention of Paul. The text first recounts the story of a Jewish man named Apollos by giving his qualifications, if you will: (1) he was an Alexandrian by birth and (2) he was an eloquent man; and (3) he was mighty in the Scriptures (δυνατὸς ὢν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς) (18:24). The credentials here speak of Apollos as one who is eloquent and well-educated.⁴ Indeed, “Alexandria was the Roman seat in Egypt. It was one of the larger cities of the empire and had a large Jewish population . . . and it was well-known for its educational opportunities and as a place of philosophical reflection.”⁵ Luke records that Apollos was instructed in the way of the Lord and that he was fervent in the spirit (18:25). Obviously, the zeal of this man seized his heart and forced him into teaching ministry. He taught and spoke accurately concerning Jesus though knew only of the baptism of John (18:25). Upon speaking boldly in

³ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 82.

⁴ See Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 591.

⁵ *Ibid.*

the synagogue, two of Paul's closest ministry comrades heard him, took him aside, and explained to him the way of God more accurately (καὶ ἀκριβέστερον αὐτῷ ἐξέθειτο τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ θεοῦ) (18:26). After this instructive discipleship from Aquila and Priscilla he desired to go to Corinth in Achaia and the believers affirmed the call and sent him off with a recommendation letter to minister the gospel of Jesus Christ there (18:27–28).

Meanwhile, Paul traveled through the previously established regions and finally arrived at Ephesus.⁶ Ephesus was located on the main highway connecting the Aegean with the rich trade routes in the east which made it the main commercial center of Asia.⁷ It was at Ephesus that he found some disciples and upon conversing with them, Paul determined that they had not received the Holy Spirit as they were only acquainted with the baptism of John (19:3–4). Paul immediately shared with these disciples the fuller revelation of Jesus Christ and how John baptized with a baptism of repentance and served to merely point all people toward Jesus (19:4). After hearing this news about Jesus, the believers were baptized and then God the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (19:6–7). Perhaps the best reason for the speaking of tongues and prophesying at this point in the conversion of these individuals is that Paul served to “validate” and provide an apostolic “verification” that these disciples are also part of the Church—the Body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 10:12; Eph 4:4–6).

One of the first places Paul sought when he entered a city was the synagogue. Paul does just this in Ephesus as he spoke boldly (ἐπαρρησιάζετο) in the synagogue reasoning

⁶ For a helpful study on the cities Paul chose for his missionary centers and why he chose these particular cities, see L. J. Lietaert Peerbolte, *Paul the Missionary* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 233–44. On the strategic nature of Ephesus, see Paul Trebilco, “Asia,” in *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting, Volume 2: The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting*, ed. by David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000), 302–12; Richard Belward Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Exposition* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 338 – 39.

⁷ See John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 394.

(διαλεγόμενος) and persuading (πείθων) men about the kingdom of God (19:8). Paul burned with passion to preach God’s truth to the Jewish people so that they may recognize Jesus as the Messiah of God and the only Savior for sin (cf. Rom 9:1; 10:1; cp. 10:9–10, 13).

Just as Jesus promised his disciples, persecution inevitably follows faithful and fearless proclamation of the gospel and this is precisely what met Paul (John 15:18–25; cp. 2 Tim 3:12). Many were hard and disobedient to the Word, spoke against the Way of Christianity. “Some of the Jews, possibly some of the synagogue officials, opposed Paul’s message and ridiculed his converts.”⁸ Consequently, Paul left the synagogue setting and planted his discipleship in the school of Tyrannus for about two years (19:9–10). This period of teaching, training, discipleship, and mentoring in the school of Tyrannus is only specifically recorded in one verse yet it comprises the bulk of Paul’s third missionary journey. Meanwhile, God worked many extraordinary miracles through Paul so that even “handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out” (19:12). These miracles validated the apostolic ministry of Paul and proved true the gospel message of Jesus Christ in the massive and pagan city of Ephesus (cf. Acts 2:22).

In fact, the miracles of Paul made such an impact that even some Jewish exorcists went from place to place attempting to demonstrate power over demons in the name of Jesus (19:13).⁹ However, God severely judged these seven exorcists as they deceptively sought

⁸ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2008), 109.

⁹ Sadly, R. Longenecker observes: “Most commentators are convinced at this point that Luke has completely set aside his sources for some popular Oriental legend, which he then attempted to recast into an edifying Christian story” (Richard N. Longenecker, “The Acts of the Apostles,” in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 12 vols. ed. by Frank E. Gaebelin [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981], 9:497). Additionally, Ramsey records: “In this Ephesian description one feels the character, not of weighed and reasoned history, but

self-aggrandizement and prideful accolades by the name of Jesus when God brought a demon possessed man into contact with these seven “exorcists.” God so powerfully worked that the demon-possessed man subdued (κατακυριεύσας) and overpowered (ἴσχυσεν) all seven of these false Jews forcing them to flee naked and wounded (19:14–16). Because of such marvelous miracles of God, the fear of God fell upon all people and God’s Name was being magnified (19:17–18, 20). Those who believed repented and brought their pagan magic books and burnt them in the presence of all signifying their total allegiance and life commitment to Jesus the Lord (19:19).

Following these events, Paul determined in his heart to return to Jerusalem after passing through Macedonia and Achaia (19:21). He eventually desired to travel to Rome (19:21). Knowing that these were future plans, Paul strategically sent Timothy and Erastus—two of his close ministry teammates—ahead to prepare the way in Macedonia while he remained in Asia for awhile (19:22). Ministry did not continue long without more confrontation and hotter persecution. Demetrius, a silversmith and builder of shrines to the goddess Artemis, gathered a crowd and began to denounce Paul and his great influence in Asia as a grave threat to their goddess Artemis (19:23–27). Upon the occasion of a massive crowd chanting repeatedly: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians,” the mob rushed into the theater dragging some of Paul’s companions so as to make a commotion and thereby attempt to once and for all put an end of this preaching of Paul’s Jesus being “Lord” (19:28–41).¹⁰ The town clerk finally quieted the shouting mob and declared that since Paul and his

of popular fancy; and I cannot explain it on the level of most of the narrative” (W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962], 273).

¹⁰ This theater in Ephesus was an immense excavation in the hillside which could contain over 24,000 persons and was frequently used as a meeting-place for the assembly (see Richard Belward Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Exposition* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003], 367).

associates are “neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess” (19:37) that they cease making a commotion. Anything beyond criminal matters should be discussed and judged in the “lawful assembly” (τῆ ἐννόμῳ ἐκκλησίᾳ) (19:39). All the while, in God’s sovereignty, the disciples refused to allow Paul to enter the theater for his own protection (19:30). And after the uproar subsided, Paul sent for the disciples, exhorted them, and then departed Ephesus for Macedonia (20:1).

Greece

Traveling westward, Paul traversed through Macedonia for a period of time. Certainly the time to travel would be lengthy but Luke records that Paul “had gone through those districts [in Macedonia] and had given them much exhortation” (παρακαλέσας αὐτοὺς λόγῳ πολλῷ) (20:2). After this time of travel and instruction, Paul arrived in Greece where he remained for three months (20:2–3a). As expected, the faithful teaching and preaching of God’s Word brought persecution and a “plot was formed against Paul by the Jews” (20:3). Learning of this plot, Paul again returned and visited those whom he just saw a few months earlier in the Macedonian regions (20:3). This journey provided Paul with traveling companions such as Sopater from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, and Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus from Asia (20:4–5). At some point on the journey Paul sent these men ahead to Troas while Paul remained for a few extra days in Macedonia before sailing to Troas (20:5). When they all gathered together again, they remained there for seven days (20:6).

Troas

On the first day of the week, the church was gathered together to break bread as was the custom of the early Church (cf. Acts 2:42), Paul began preaching (διελέγετο) the day before they planned to set sail for home (20:7). Doubtlessly preaching with fire and passion,

Paul prolonged his message until midnight. Conybeare and Howson vividly recount this event:

Many lamps were burning in the room where the congregation was assembled. The place was hot and crowded. St. Paul, with the feeling strongly impressed on his mind that the next day was the day of his departure, and that souls might be lost by delay, was continuing in earnest discourse, and prolonging it even till midnight, when an occurrence suddenly took place, which filled the assembly with alarm, though it was afterwards converted into an occasion of joy and thanksgiving.¹¹

One young man named Eutychus listened to Paul preach while sitting in a window sill in the upper room and fell asleep, fell back to the ground, and was found dead (20:9).¹² Such an interruption seized Paul's attention and he went down, fell upon Eutychus, embraced him, and the life of the man returned to him (20:10). Luke very mildly writes that the people were "greatly comforted" (παρεκλήθησαν οὐ μετρίως) (20:12). Certainly there must have been an overwhelming shock that God worked so mightily in their midst! Following this event, Paul and his associates traveled to the ship where Paul's associates set sail for Assos as Paul previously arranged to meet them there by land (for presumably a prolonged period of church visitation or personal prayer). After everyone left Assos, they came to Mitylene, then past Chios to Samos and then to Miletus (20:14–15).

Miletus

Paul determined in his heart to continue to sail to Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost so he refused to enter Ephesus (20:16). But he summoned for the elders of the Ephesian church to meet him in Miletus so he could exhort them one final time before he traveled on to Jerusalem (20:17).¹³ Luke does not specify how many elders the Ephesian church had but the

¹¹ W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1971), 545.

¹² For a good exposition appropriately titled: "Falling Asleep in Church," see R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 269–74.

text does note that they had a plurality of elders in the local church giving oversight to that congregation (cf. 20:28). This speech of Paul is the only one Luke records on Paul's third missionary journey.¹⁴ There is a sort of trilogy of mission speeches in each of Paul's journeys: (1) on the first journey Paul addressed the Jews in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch (ch. 13). (2) On the second journey he addressed the pagans in his famous Areopagus speech (ch. 17). (3) On the third journey he spoke to the Christian leaders of the Ephesian congregation in the address at Miletus (ch. 20).¹⁵ J. Fitzmyer notes: "The farewell speech is a well-known literary form: a speech made at a scene of separation (departure, death) that recalls past service, mentions the present situation, appoints successors for the future, exhorts to fidelity, and reminds the hearers that the speaker will probably not see them again."¹⁶ The speech divides into three sections:

I.	Paul's testimony while he served with them	Acts 20:18–24
II.	Paul's exhortation to shepherd Christ's church	Acts 20:25–31
III.	Paul's challenge to personally live with integrity	Acts 20:32–35

¹³ For some helpful and pertinent background information, consult Simon J. Kistemaker, "The Speeches in Acts," *CTR* 5, no. 1 (1990): 39.

¹⁴ Cole writes: "From this passage, Dr. Luke gives us some clues to Paul's Asian strategy in which he established an effective Leadership Farm System from the School of Tyrannus. We can identify seven strategic objectives that Paul implemented while in Ephesus which unleashed and fueled the grassroots spread of the gospel across the continent" (Neil Cole, "A Fresh Perspective on Paul's Missionary Strategies: The Mentoring for Multiplication Model," [1998], <http://www.coachnet.org/drupalfiles/images/articles/paulstrategy.pdf> [accessed July 8, 2010]):

1. Paul established a regional base of church planter development (Acts 19:9, 20:18).
2. Paul implemented a teaching/mentoring strategy by life example, both in large gatherings and small groups (Acts 20:19-20).
3. Paul integrated evangelism into the spiritual formation of his disciples as a foundation for training leaders for ministry (Acts 20:21).
4. Paul released the power of God's word in people's lives to carry the grassroots movement of multiplication (Acts 19:20).
5. Paul gave the Holy Spirit His rightful place in leading his disciples into ministry (Acts 20:28).
6. Paul mentored individuals on a one-to-one basis (Acts 20:31).
7. Paul empowered his leaders with accountability to God for the work that he modeled for them, so that his presence wasn't needed for the work to continue after him (Acts 20:32).

¹⁵ See Polhill, *Acts*, 44.

¹⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 674.

This speech is the only one of the larger speeches addressed to a Christian audience in Acts and it expresses closely the pastoral heart and ecclesiological spirit of the Apostle Paul.¹⁷

Paul's testimony while he served with them (Acts 20:18–24)

Paul starts his exhortation with the Ephesian elders by reminding them of how he lived with them serving the Lord with humility, tears and trials (20:18–19). Many of the hardships Paul endured came from the ferocious plots and prerogatives of the Jews in Asia (20:19). Nevertheless, Paul affirmed that he did not shrink away (ὑπεστειλάμην) from declaring anything that was profitable for spiritual living (20:20). In fact, Paul taught both in public settings and in private settings going from house to house (20:20). The crux of his proclamation was singularly to testify to all people—Jews and Gentiles—to “repent toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” (20:21).

Paul reveals to these beloved men his passion to return to Jerusalem where, humanly speaking, he is uncertain of what will befall him yet spiritually speaking he recognizes God is sovereign (20:22–23). That persecutions and afflictions await Paul does not thwart his passion to return to Jerusalem in the slightest. The only possible explanation for this kind of attitude is that Paul counted his life as worth nothing *for himself* but he counted his life as worth everything *for Christ* and for the completion of the ministry to which God had entrusted to him (20:24). Therefore, Paul testified to his own ministry with these dear men as he testified solemnly (διαμαρτύρασθαι) of the gospel of the grace of God (20:24).

Gilliland aptly summarizes:

In these verses we are looking at qualities of the missionary in ministry that do not come easily. The comprehensive way in which Paul carried out his daily work and the total commitment he showed by methods that touched the whole of life were full of difficulties. Preaching the cross is a message that will offend. Faithfulness in

¹⁷ See Stanley E. Porter, *Paul in Acts*, LPS (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), 115.

declaring the whole gospel will cause some to stumble (Gal 5:11). There is no question in Paul's mind about this. The preaching and teaching of the total gospel are required of all who are leaders. While the methods need to be carefully thought out from place to place, Paul insists that there can be no suppression of the cost of believing and following the Lord; neither can there be a watering down of the message for the sake of comfort to the messenger.¹⁸

Paul's exhortation to shepherd Christ's Church (Acts 20:25–31)

Transitioning in his speech to the Ephesian elders away from Paul's personal testimony of his ministry with them, he now soberly states that they will not meet face to face again (20:25). For this reason, he testifies to them that he is innocent before the Lord and that he did not shrink from declaring the "whole purpose of God" (ἀναγγεῖλαι πᾶσαν τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θεοῦ) (20:27). Evidently, Paul labored painstakingly to minister the full counsel of God to these church leaders so they might then be equipped to learn from his example and teach the flock the biblical truths (cf. 1 Cor 11:1).

The command Paul gives to these shepherds is to "be on guard" (προσέχετε) first for themselves and their own personal lives and then for all the flock over which God the Spirit has sovereignly ordained them to be ministers (20:28). The goal and purpose of their ministry is "to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (20:28). Paul's purpose for ministry is to preach the gospel and then shepherd the sheep that God calls to Himself (cf. John 10:11–18; 1 Pet 5:1–2; Eph 4:11–18). The immeasurably high calling that God gives to elders is the responsibility to shepherd (under-shepherds) the flock of sheep that God has entrusted to them. This consists of a responsibility that one man cannot accomplish by himself. The leadership must work together to make certain the entire flock entrusted to their care is watched and guarded.

¹⁸ Dean S. Gilliland, "For Missionaries and Leaders: Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders, Acts 20:17–38," in *Mission in Acts: Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context*, ASMS 34, ed. by Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 261.

As if they may have forgotten, Paul reminds them that savage wolves will come in among them not sparing the flock (20:29). The prey that these wolves will seek is none other than helpless, bruised, and struck-down sheep that are unattended and uncared for. Oh the responsibility these overseers have! And if that is not bad enough, from within the church itself (ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν) some will arise with false doctrine leading individuals away from the truth (τοῦ ἀποσπᾶν τοὺς μαθητὰς ὀπίσω αὐτῶν) (20:30). For this reason Paul reiterates what he commanded earlier: “be on the alert” (γρηγορεῖτε) (20:31)! The shepherding ministry in the local church is no lightweight occupation. It is an all-consuming ministry! This is why Paul reminded them that night and day for three entire years Paul did not cease to admonish each person with tears (οὐκ ἐπαυσάμην μετὰ δακρύων νοουθετῶν ἕνα ἕκαστον) (20:31).

Paul’s challenge to personally live with integrity (Acts 20:32–35)

After this exhortation that Paul passionately gave to the Ephesian elders, he commended them to God and to the “word of his grace” (τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ). This is their responsibility, namely, to carry on the word of God’s grace (20:32). Not that Paul coveted anyone’s belongings but Paul loved the people enough to work as a tentmaker in addition to serving the people in Ephesus. Paul admonishes them to remember the saying of Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (20:35).

Concluding his message, Paul knelt down and prayed with the men and they wept and embraced Paul and repeatedly kissed him as they knew they would probably never see him again (20:36–38). After this period of prayer, they accompanied him to the ship where Paul and his associates departed for home (20:38–21:1).

The Return

After the separation with the Ephesian elders, Paul and his ministry partners departed and ran a straight course to Cos where the next day they boarded a ship to Rhodes and then from there to Patara (21:1). In Patara, they found a ship departing for Phoenicia and they boarded and set sail and finally landed at Tyre in Syria (21:3). Gathering with the believers in Tyre, they remained for seven days. During this time, those in Tyre exhorted Paul repeatedly not to “set foot in Jerusalem” but Paul refused to acquiesce to their counsel and he then entered a ship and sailed home to Ptolemais and then to Caesarea (21:6–8). Thus marks the completion of Paul’s travels on his third missionary journey but not the termination of his influence for the gospel of Jesus Christ in those regions!

CHAPTER 4

GLOBAL MINISTRY TECHNIQUES FROM ACTS 18–21

Introduction

The Bible reveals its usefulness and profitableness for every matter pertaining to life and godliness (2 Tim 3:16–17; 2 Pet 1:3–4). Barnett has insightfully recognized:

Paul the missionary became the great example for centuries of those who would leave the security and comfort of home for the perils and uncertainty of the itinerant missionary. Regardless whether we consider the early missions to Egypt, China, and Russia, or the early medieval Irish missions to Europe or the missions that accompanied European colonization in the Americas, Africa, and Asia, the main inspiration and example for them all was Paul, as narrated by the book of Acts and by Paul's own letters. Paul was and remains the exemplary missionary.¹

For this reason, this paper will derive several global ministry techniques from observing Paul's example on his third missionary journey. Polhill rightly sees the significance of Acts for global missions today:

The book of Acts is in a real sense a book for renewal. It calls the church back to its roots—to the early church in the upper room in its undivided devotion to prayer, to its missionary fervor, its fellowship and sharing, its mutual trust and unity. It sets a pattern for faithful discipleship, for a witness that walks in the footsteps of the Master, a wholehearted commitment with a willingness to sacrifice and even to suffer. It speaks to us when discouraged, reminding us that all time is in God's hands, reassuring us of the reality of his Spirit in our lives and witness. It challenges us to open our hearts to the power of the Spirit that we might be faithful witnesses to the word and come to experience anew its triumph in our own time.²

Thus, because God's Word is eternally profitable this chapter will offer eleven global ministry techniques from observing the example of Paul.

¹ Paul Barnett, *Paul: Missionary of Jesus*, After Jesus, Volume 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 199.

² John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 72.

Eleven Global Ministry Techniques

Closely observing Paul's third missionary journey will show how Paul served the Lord and ministered the Word of God in a global context with the supposition that God is sovereign and directs his path and the hearts of those to whom he preaches. As J. Polhill states: "One must remember that the word of God is inseparable from the work of God. Acts strongly emphasizes the sovereignty of God. In every respect God controls the outreach of the church. He directs its evangelists; he convicts those who respond."³ Applying Paul's example to today's global ministry context, Polhill wisely remarks:

Paul challenges the Christian leaders to follow his own example of servant ministry: preaching repentance and faith in Christ without distinction to all who will listen, serving even in the face of persecution, holding to sound doctrine, and ministering generously without an eye to personal profit. It is a good model for anyone who would be an evangelist of Jesus Christ.⁴

1. Re-visitation—Deliberate follow-up with gospel centers previously established

Part of Paul's passion consisted of retracing and revisiting those churches that he previously ministered to.⁵ For instance, in Acts 18:23 Luke records that after Paul spent time with his home church in Antioch after his second journey, he decided to "pass successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples" that he met before (cf. 16:6; 20:16–17; cp. 14:21–23). The example Paul provides is the timeless concept of revisiting those new believers after a period of time has passed for follow up. This follow-up

³ John B. Polhill, "Evangelism in the Acts of the Apostles," *SBJT* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 12–13. The benefits of examining Paul and his "methods" are numerous but one should remember the insightful words of Grassi along these lines: "[Paul] would say that he had no 'methods,' in the dictionary sense of the word: 'a procedure or process for attaining an object,' and would be quick to attribute any success he had to the Risen Jesus working through them in concrete human situations. If we use the term 'method' in its basic original sense, however, of 'a following after,' we can truly apply it in his case; for Paul's whole life was a 'following after' Christ, keeping himself always flexible to apprehend His wishes" (Joseph A. Grassi, *A World to Win: The Missionary Methods of Paul the Apostle* [Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Publications, 1965], vii–viii.).

⁵ See Paul Bowers, "Fulfilling the Gospel: The Scope of the Pauline Mission," *JETS* 30, no. 2 (June 1987): 189–90.

ensures spiritual growth, provides for spiritual encouragement, allows for mature and solid doctrine and teaching, and practically shows the believers that Christianity is not a “once-and-for-all decision” but a continual life surrendered to Jesus Christ as Lord.

Revisiting believers in various mission fields across the globe requires deliberate planning, sufficient time, and most of all, determined resolve. Missionaries long to be faithful to God. Missionaries desire to do great things for God. And the temptation can arise for the missionary to neglect the newborn believers and desire to tread *new* ground where the gospel has never been heard. Not that the latter should be neglected, but not to the ignoring of the former. That is to say, Paul made deliberate plans to revisit those churches that he preached in, planted, and traveled through to encourage the believers in their faith and exhort them to walk in Christlikeness.

2. Strengthening—Conscious teaching, exhortation, and encouragement of new believers

The Christian walk must never be stagnant. Paul wanted the believers who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit to grow and “be strengthened” in their faith. Luke writes that as Paul revisited the churches he was “strengthening all the disciples” (ἐπιστηρίζων πάντας τοὺς μαθητάς) (18:23). Later, as Paul was in Ephesus he preached in the Jewish synagogue until hostility forced Paul to retreat to the school of Tyrannus. But it was at this school that he “took away the disciples and reasoned daily . . . for two years” (19:9–10). Paul “daily reasoned” (καθ’ ἡμέραν διαλεγόμενος) with his disciples and taught many the word of the Lord (19:10). Grassi states:

In Paul’s time, when the emperor or some public authority wished to announce to the people an important message affecting their lives, he employed a herald or town crier who would arrive in town, blow a trumpet and announce in a loud voice an authoritative message from the ruling powers. It was really not the messenger who spoke; he was only an instrument by which the voice of the ruler could reach the people. He did not voice his own convictions, but was a mouthpiece or agent of the

king. He had to announce an important truth that would affect the lives of all his hearers.⁶

This kind of deliberate teaching and skilled reasoning must have strengthened the believers in Ephesus greatly.

This principle strikes the heart of what the Apostle Paul endeavored to do on his journeys. Through the faithful teaching and preaching of the Word of God he desired to see people not only converted but also growing in their knowledge of Christ (cf. Eph 1:18–20; Phil 3:10; Col 1:9–10; 2 Pet 3:18).⁷ Bowers writes: “Paul repeatedly displays commitment not only to founding but also to upbuilding, not only to begetting but also to rearing, not only to planting but also to nurturing.”⁸ Later on this third missionary journey, Paul will tell the Ephesian elders when they gather at Miletus that he did not cease to “admonish each one” (νουθετῶν ἕνα ἕκαστον) from the word of God (20:27, 31). After Jesus rose from the dead, he commissioned his followers with this imperative: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe* all that I commanded you’” (Matt 28:18–20). Thus, Paul has the same desire that Jesus does, namely, to see true believers growing stronger and walking deeper with God.

⁶ Joseph A. Grassi, *A World to Win: The Missionary Methods of Paul the Apostle* (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Publications, 1965), 51.

⁷ Peerbolte sees this as an inseparable 2-stage process of Paul’s journeys. The first stage is where Paul would preach the gospel and the second stage is that in which he had to come to the aid of the newly formed congregation by admonishing them with his apostolic advice” (L. J. Lietaert Peerbolte, *Paul the Missionary* [Leuven: Peeters, 2003], 205). But, all in all, Peerbolte affirms: “the proclamation of the Christ event was *the* central activity” (ibid., 207; emphasis original).

⁸ Paul Bowers, “Fulfilling the Gospel: The Scope of the Pauline Mission,” *JETS* 30, no. 2 (June 1987): 189.

3. Equipping—Humbly and patiently teaching, raising up, and sending qualified individuals to the global field

One would hardly think that a person with the credentials—“an eloquent man . . . who was mighty in the Scriptures”—would need to be equipped and taught. But this is precisely where Apollos found himself. He was an Alexandrian man who was familiar with the way of the Lord and with the Scriptures but knew only of the baptism of John. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him teaching they gently, patiently, and privately taught him accurately concerning the things of Jesus. A couple of factors come to light in this passage relevant to the context of equipping.⁹

First, Priscilla and Aquila heard Apollos teach in the synagogue and they *knew* God’s Word well enough to recognize that his teaching was incomplete (18:26). On his second journey in Greece, Paul met Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth, lodged with them, worked as tent-makers together with them, and ministered the word of the Lord together with them in that pagan city (Acts 18:1–4). Paul’s ability to teach, equip, and turn over was evident throughout his church-planting days and this is precisely what he did with Priscilla and Aquila.¹⁰ Consequently, Priscilla and Aquila obviously recognized Apollos’ teaching as missing the crux of the gospel—the ministry and death of Jesus Christ—and they were well-equipped and sufficiently taught to take this man aside and minister the fuller picture of the gospel in a way that he obviously accepted as true.¹¹ So Priscilla and Aquila, some of Paul’s

⁹ For a helpful study on this issue, see Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2008), 248–55.

¹⁰ Grace Preedy Barnes, “The Art of Finishing Well: Paul as Servant Leader,” in *Mission in Acts: Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context*, ASMS 34, ed. by Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 244.

¹¹ R. Kent Hughes describes it: “Priscilla and Aquila had none of this nit-picking mentality. Their method was beautifully life-giving. They took the young man aside and ministered Christ to him. Maybe they washed his feet and gave him a good Sabbath supper. They certainly lovingly completed his theological picture. Apollos of Alexandria at this time became born again—baptized with the Spirit. This godly couple’s attitude

previous missionary companions, were well-equipped and prepared to take God's Word and apply it to the heart and life of Apollos. God's primary instrument is the Word through believers in the Church who function as His agents in teaching that Word to people.¹²

Second, Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos so that he was equipped and ready to take the biblical gospel in its fullest and magnificent riches to other parts of the known world at that time. John Calvin notes the attitude that Apollos exemplified: "Apollos, too, showed humility in offering himself to be taught not only by a manual working but also by a woman. He was far superior to them, but they gave him the finishing touches concerning the kingdom of Christ."¹³ When Apollos received the fuller revelation about Jesus, his ministry, his death, his resurrection, and his salvation, he "wanted to go across to Achaia" (18:27).¹⁴ The missionary principle of equipping individuals for the work of the ministry is so crucial and when this is properly done, as is the case here with Paul to Aquila and Priscilla and then to Apollos, one finds joy in obeying the admonition in Scripture: "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2).

4. Confirmation and Sending—Affirmation from the local congregation that certain individuals are qualified, equipped, and prepared for the work of the ministry

God raises up individuals who have been regenerated by His Holy Spirit and who are qualified as living exemplary lives worthy of global pastoral ministry (cf. 1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus

made all the difference" (*Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word [Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996], 248).

¹² George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 159.

¹³ John Calvin, *Acts*, CCC (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995), 316.

¹⁴ Darrell Bock insightfully notes: "These ministers encourage each other in a task they know they share. They are aware that it is a task bigger than any one of them. This encouragement even extends to letters of recommendation so that people will be more likely to receive what he is saying. This kind of mutual cooperation and encouragement in pursuit of a theologically faithful ministry enables the church to carry out its mission" (*Acts*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 593–94).

1:5–9) and part of the way God works in validating a believer’s “call” to the mission field is the affirmation and confirmation received from the believing community. This is exactly what happens to Apollos. Upon receiving the knowledge of the full gospel and having the desire to go to Achaia and minister the gospel there, Luke writes: “the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him” (18:27). The church came together and confirmed that Apollos was qualified, able, and ready to be a missionary for the Lord. Not only that, they even wrote a letter and sent it with him to the church where Apollos would go so that they would receive him in the Lord.

Luke writes of a similar account in Acts 13 at the inauguration of the first missionary journey. While the believers were gathered together, the Spirit said to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work of the ministry and then the church fasted, prayed, and “laid their hands on them” and then sent them off (13:2–3). The picture of laying the hands on someone is the idea of affirmation, confirmation, and acceptance of the divine call (cf. Acts 6:6; cp. Num 8:10; Lev 1:4). The principle that Scripture reveals here is that the church—obviously comprising regenerated believers—affirms men and women who are biblically qualified and capable of carrying on the work of the ministry. If the church can accept this high responsibility for an individual wanting to be a missionary, then he qualifies for global ministry.

5. Longevity—Remaining in a particular city with a particular church for a length of time

Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians that “it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy” (4:2). The word “trustworthy” is πιστός and can be translated “faithful.” Faithfulness is a mark of a man of God in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Paul knew faithfulness and he lived it. Each of his journeys portray a man who visited congregations that were previously established but he had his eyes set on a major (pagan!) city where he

could plant roots, minister, live among the people, and be faithful to the work of the Lord as long as God would sovereignly allow. There was “no restless rushing from one new opening to another but rather a methodical progress concerned both with initiating work in new areas and at the same time bringing the emergent groups in those areas to stable maturity.”¹⁵ J. van Bruggen writes concerning Ephesus, the hub city on Paul’s third journey, “This important city on the western coast of Turkey now becomes for many years the center of Paul’s work. Although we do not know much about this period, it is clear that they were very eventful years.”¹⁶ In a word: “Paul stayed long enough [in Ephesus] to have an impact.”¹⁷ In Acts 19:9–10 Paul ministered for two full years in the school of Tyrannus teaching *daily* (καθ’ ἡμέραν). Paul, a missionary to this previously un-reached city for the gospel, taught daily for more than two years without a furlough!

On his second journey, Paul planted his camp in Corinth for a year and six months (18:11) and then on his third journey, Paul planted roots in Ephesus for three years (20:31)—two of which were spent daily ministering in the school of Tyrannus (19:9). When one prolongs ministry in a specific location, the door opens for God to continually work through His word through the faithful proclamation of His word to those who hear. In fact, God did “extraordinary miracles” through Paul (19:11) and most certainly because of this amazing ministry, God used the longevity of it to bring many people to Himself (cf. 19:18–19). This is why Luke records: “So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing” (19:20). Then, after a goodly number of solid Christians existed in Ephesus, “Paul purposed in the

¹⁵ Paul Bowers, “Fulfilling the Gospel: The Scope of the Pauline Mission,” *JETS* 30, no. 2 (June 1987): 189–90.

¹⁶ Jakob van Bruggen, *Paul: Pioneer for Israel’s Messiah*, trans. by Ed M. van der Maas (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005), 87. He continues: “We can nevertheless speak of a three-year period during which Ephesus was the home base for Paul’s work as an apostle—the longest time he spent in one place” (*ibid.*, 89).

¹⁷ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 614.

spirit to go to Jerusalem” (19:21). It must be remembered that faithful ministry, godly living, and right doctrine exposes religious hypocrites thereby drawing more people to God and exalting Him (19:11-17). This is most effectively accomplished through a ministry over the course of a period of time.

6. Delegation—The careful and biblical choosing of gifted individuals to go and carry on the work of the ministry

Church ministry is only as solid as the leadership in that church. The spiritual maturity of a particular congregation will never rise above the spiritual maturity of its leaders. Paul knew this and carefully delegated two men who exemplified Godly character and exemplary qualifications to go ahead of him to Macedonia—Timothy and Erastus (19:22). This delegation on Paul’s part reveals the necessity of a plurality of leadership. No one—not even Paul—can accomplish the work of the ministry alone. Because of this, gifted and qualified individuals must be raised up, chosen, and entrusted with leadership capabilities to guide, shepherd, and lead the church to the glory of Jesus Christ. Schnabel states: “a further goal of Paul’s missionary work was the training of new missionaries. The coworkers who accompanied Paul on his travels participated in his missionary activities and can thus be seen as trainees.”¹⁸

The same pattern is found when Paul meets with the Ephesian elders (20:17–35). Essentially this is the pattern of multiplying leaders who already evidence godly leadership characteristics and then delegating them with leadership responsibilities (cf. 1 Tim 3:1–7; cp. Ex 18:17–27). This assumes that the present leaders understand the responsibility of training up more leaders under their mentorship and tutelage and then delegating ministry

¹⁸ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 248.

responsibilities to them with the eventual goal of sending them off to carry on and further the ministry of the Lord and to increase the harvest in Christ's Church.¹⁹

7. Persecution and Departure—Understanding that faithful proclamation of God's Word brings opposition and knowing when to depart a particular city

If there ever was a man who understood what persecution for the name of Jesus Christ was about, it certainly was the Apostle Paul (cf. 2 Cor 11:23–29). He clearly understood his responsibility in “filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions” (Col 1:24). He knew that “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim 3:12) because Jesus Himself said:

If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me (John 15:18-21).

Paul and his ministry associates experienced these words of Jesus firsthand—on all their journeys!

Referring to the third journey specifically, Paul faithfully spoke and taught the Word of God about Jesus (cf. 19:8–10) and this inevitably brought hostility. God used Paul and the teaching of His Word to bring many to repentance and faith in Ephesus (19:19–20).

Consequently, there was, in the words of Luke, “no small disturbance about the Way”

¹⁹ Darrell Bock furthers this thought: “In sum, this text [of Paul addressing the Ephesian elders] makes a major statement about the responsibility of shepherding that is to be the task of God's leaders. When Paul prepares the communities to function in his absence, he notes that his responsibility was to equip them both positively and negatively. Positively, they are to develop a theological understanding that reflects exposure to the entire counsel and program of God and that gives them a mind-set that can discern what is taking place. This is equipping in the most positive sense. Out of genuine understanding comes discernment. Negatively, it means being on guard for the deception and distortion that the world often offers and that can seep into the church, undermining its call, testimony, and mission. Protecting from the undercutting of God's unique saving work in and through Christ is what Paul is most concerned about. This is what he preached as God's word about God's plan” (*Acts*, 633).

(τάραχος οὐκ ὀλίγος περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ) (19:23). The pagan worship of the goddess Artemis was in jeopardy because of this “new teaching.” Luke records what disturbed the Ephesians when he wrote the words of Paul’s enemies as they said:

Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence. When they heard *this* and were filled with rage, they *began* crying out, saying, ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’ The city was filled with the confusion . . . (Acts 19:27–29).

Shortly after this, the hostile Jews plotted against Paul which hastily forced him to set sail (20:3). Or, similarly, when persecution seized the area where he ministered he would move to geographically adjacent areas that were open for missionary work.²⁰

Undoubtedly there were many persecutions that the believers endured in the ministry in Ephesus since Paul reminded the Ephesian elders later when they met in Miletus that they served the Lord with tears and with trials (πειρασμῶν) yet, nonetheless, Paul refused to shrink away from declaring the whole purpose of God (20:19–20, 27).

There is wisdom to be gleaned in observing the example of Paul as they faithfully ministered the truth of Jesus to a hostile environment where persecution lurked on virtually every corner. They endured and they were faithful. Yet there came a point when the plots of the Jews were so ferocious that Paul left that city to carry on the ministry elsewhere (20:3, 19; cp. Matt 10:11–15). One should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matt 5:10–12).

²⁰ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 224.

8. Partnering—Surrounding the missionary with a Godly, qualified, capable team of individuals with a like-minded passion to see God’s glory displayed in the salvation of the lost and the training of believers in righteousness

Without humility, unity, and like-mindedness, discord is on the horizon. The essential element of partnering with other missionaries on the mission field is advantageous not only for the furthering of the gospel far and wide but for the encouragement and spiritual nourishment of each missionary.²¹ A lone ranger is a dead ranger. So it is in the Christian life—and how much more on the mission field! The very first missionary journey in the church age that Luke records lays the foundation for partners²² in ministry to go out together as the Spirit set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work of God (13:2). At the outset of the second journey, after a sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas over taking Mark or not (who previously abandoned them on the first journey (13:13), they separated and Barnabas took Mark and Paul chose Silas and they went their respective ways to serve the Lord (13:39–40). On Paul’s third journey he was accompanied by more than a handful of individuals including Luke, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus (20:4–5, 14). This is most clearly seen on the third journey as Paul deliberately

²¹ Bowers agrees: “There are those instances where Paul engages other believers in a cooperative missionary team for the fulfillment of his mission. . . . Certainly it emphasizes the fact that Paul did not see the mission as peculiar to himself” (Paul Bowers, “Church and Mission in Paul,” *JSNT* 44 [Dec 1991]: 103).

²² The term “partnership” in the context of missions usually refers to “an association of two or more Christian autonomous bodies who have formed a trusting relationship and fulfill agreed-upon expectations by sharing complementary strengths and resources to reach their mutual goal” (Luis Bush, “In Pursuit of True Christian Partnership: A Biblical Basis from Philippians,” in *Partners in the Gospel: The Strategic Role of Partnership in World Evangelization*, ed. by James H. Kraakevik and Dotsey Welliver [Wheaton: Bill Graham Center, 1991], 7; cf. Steven Downey, “Partnership Re-visited,” *EMQ* 42, no. 2 [April 2006]: 200–2). But for the purposes of this section of the paper the notion of “partnering” is specifically referring to missionaries partnering together on the mission field together laboring for the furthering of the gospel.

partners with many different Godly individuals to serve side by side taking the gospel far and wide.²³

An effective quality gleaned from these passages is the importance of doing ministry with a qualified team where each individual recognizes his/her responsibility to be humble, selfless, servant-minded, Christlike, and labor together to glorify God and further the work of Christ's Church through the power of the Spirit. Peters summarizes:

In our days of tensions, gropings and searchings, we do well to look more closely and confidently to Paul as an example and to the Holy Spirit to show us some of His guiding principles of partnership in missions. We will not find it easy to enter into true partnership, for partnership eliminates the over-against, the side-by-side, the one over the other, and the one submerging in the other. Partnership in missions is a sacred and comprehensive concept of equals bound together in mutual confidence, unified purpose and united effort, accepting equal responsibilities, authority, praise and blame; sharing burdens, joys, sorrows, victories and defeats. It means joint planning, joint legislation, joint programming, and involves the sending and receiving churches on an equal basis. Only the closest bond in Christ, savored by a rich measure of humility, love, confidence and self-giving, will actualize partnership. Partnership of equality and mutuality in missions is as much an attitude, a spiritual, social and theological relationship, a philosophy of ministry, a way of life and missions, as it is a defined pattern of church-mission relationship for administration and legislation.²⁴

9. Planning—Carefully strategizing the future of the ministry as to how and where the work of the Lord can be most effectively accomplished

Part of life consists of being good stewards of the time with which God has entrusted to us to use for His glory. Though believers must not be arrogant or prideful in thinking that tomorrow *must* happen (cf. James 4:13–17) there is an element of careful planning and humble strategizing so as to make the best use of the time that God has given (Prov 16:3, 9; 19:21; 21:5; cp. 6:6–8; James 4:15). And the Christian must do this while always being

²³ See E. Earle Ellis, "Paul and His Co-Workers," *NTS* 17, no. 4 (July 1971): 437–52; Victor Paul Furnish, "Fellow Workers in God's Service," *JBL* 80, no. 4 (Dec 1961): 364–70.

²⁴ George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 238.

cognizant of the reality that God could at any moment alter plans according to His sovereign will and purpose (Isa 46:10).

Missionaries must carefully strategize the future of the ministry so as to most effectively minister the gospel of Jesus Christ. This necessitates deliberate planning. Paul exemplified this on numerous occasions. Acts 20:7 records how Paul gathered with the believers to break bread in Troas and how he had intended to leave on the next day. Furthermore, Luke tells of how Paul later decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia (having already spent a long time there earlier in the journey) because he was “hurrying” (ἔσπευδεν) to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (20:16). R. Allen states that “Paul apparently laid his plans and executed them as they were designed.”²⁵ Indeed, Paul had a strategy in his ministry.²⁶ Plans, strategies, and future ministry tactics are crucial to effective ministry.

10. Indigenous Leadership-Equipping—Focusing on raising up leaders native to their particular region to most effectively preach, teach, and shepherd Christ’s church

On a brief layover in Miletus, Paul summoned the elders from Ephesus to come for one final encouragement and exhortation before he resumed his travels on to Israel. This stop in Miletus was near the conclusion of the third missionary journey. The first major part of the journey resided in the city of Ephesus. During that time Paul preached, taught, persuaded, reasoned, and equipped believers to grow stronger in their faith so they could carry on the ministry after his departure.

This account in Acts 20 as Paul challenges the Ephesian elders reveals Paul’s passion for indigenous leaders to faithfully, fearlessly, and biblically continue on the work of the

²⁵ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1962), 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

ministry. Note that Paul did not enter one city and decide to spend the rest of his life there. Rather, he made it his goal to preach the gospel where Christ was not named, and after God called sinners to Himself, he then taught them the word of the Lord and showed them how to carry on the work of the ministry. All of this Paul did with the ultimate desire of leaving that city and moving on to the next city when indigenous believers are equipped, qualified, and able to lead the believers in that particular city or region.

Clearly, Paul emphasized to these men the most important elements of ministry as he thought he would never see them again on this earth. He told them to be on guard for themselves and for the flock of which they are overseers (20:28). They are to shepherd the church which consists of sheep that Christ bought with his own precious blood (20:28). Paul highlights the inevitable reality that opposition will arise and that men even from within the church will teach false doctrine hoping to lead sheep astray (20:29–30). Amazingly, however, Paul’s only counsel to them as to when this hostility happens is to “be on the alert” and be faithful “to the word of His grace which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (20:32). Thus, when hardship comes, keep preaching the Word. Nothing should ever change when oppression knocks. Paul evidently had a passionate heart for church leaders who teach God’s Word and he wanted the Ephesian elders to know that God is with them and that they must be faithful no matter what kind of plots Satan may employ against their particular congregation.

11. Genuine Love—Clothing the entire ministry with a humble, servant-minded, and selfless attitude of love

For Paul to remain in the pagan cult-centers that he did for the length of time that he did with the hostile oppression that he endured he must have had a genuine love for the

people to whom he ministered. The missionary today should experience the same passion for those to whom he labors for and with globally.

Perhaps the best demonstration of Paul's sincere and heartfelt love for those he ministered to can be found as he departs Miletus and bids farewell to the Ephesian elders—men with whom he labored for years! Luke writes that after Paul spoke to them one final time (20:18–35) he knelt down and prayed with them all and that they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul and repeatedly kissed him (20:36–37). A number of important qualities are noted in these concise verses.

First, Paul's genuine love was expressed in *Godly humility*. This is evidenced as Paul and the elders knelt down together as they prayed. Second, Paul's genuine love was expressed in *Godly dependence*. Paul not only knelt with the men but they all prayed together. His genuine love for them was expressed as they prayed together. No doubt they prayed for each other's safety but most probably they prayed for the ministry of the word to continue growing strong (cf. 2 Thess 3:1). Third, Paul's genuine love was expressed in *Godly affection*. This kind of affection can only come through long periods of time laboring side by side through good and bad times, easy and hard times, times of ease and times of extreme opposition. These elders notably had an affection and sincere love for Paul and certainly he did for them as well.

No Christian ministry can thrive without genuine love in action. The church in Corinth had a severe *lack* of love and Paul wrote to them reproving them and showing them what true, Christlike love looks like:

Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with

the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never fails (1 Cor 13:4–8).

The evident reality in each of these pregnant phrases is that each one consists of a verb form. That means every one of the attributes of love expresses *action*. It could almost be thought of, for instance, as expressing this sort of idea “love *patiences* hardship,” “love *brags* not” or “love *rejoices* with truth.” Without this kind of love, the church will never be built up and most distressingly, the church will never be a picture of Christ’s *genuine love* for the Church since the Scripture says: “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16; Eph 5:25–27). Indeed, the missionary principle of genuine love must be characteristic of all missionaries and ministries because Jesus said: “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

CHAPTER 5
PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES

Introduction

John Calvin penned: “The things that Luke sets down for our instruction are great things and of extraordinary benefit.”¹ The benefits of observing Paul’s journey are manifold. This chapter proffers practical ways to implement some of the ministry elements into the local church ministry.²

Some Practical Applications

The Apostle Paul was the missionary extraordinaire and the example he sets provides a helpful model for churches, missionary agencies, pastors, and missionaries to effectively minister the gospel of Jesus Christ across the globe.³

First, the way a church focusing heavily on short term missions trips can practically revisit missionaries and missionary fields is quite simply to continue going to that same ministry year after year. For instance, if a local church has a missionary in China and the church has sent short-term teams to China the last five years to serve the missionary and his ministry, the church should not consider that it is time to move on. Rather, it may be most

¹ John Calvin, *Acts*, CCC (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995), ix.

² Indeed, “missions cannot be properly addressed apart from the context of the local church” (David M. Doran, *For the Sake of His Name: Challenging a New Generation for World Missions* [Allen Park, MI: Student Global Impact, 2002], 156).

³ Doran rightly sees the connection here between the missionary and the local church: “Individual believers engage in missions, but I would contend that they must do so in connection with the local church. I believe each local church will be evaluated by the Lord on the basis of His Word. That means we must give our energy to understanding and applying it to life in the local church, and to the church’s missions program” (*For the Sake of His Name*, 156).

beneficial to those in the particular region if teams come over year after year and the people see the faithfulness of this local church and missionary teaming together to faithfully revisit these people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Second, Christians do well to major on the things the Bible majors on. One such key element in the ministry is that of the teaching and preaching of the Word of God. Schnabel concurs: “Paul’s description of his missionary task focuses on the preaching of the gospel as the primary goal.”⁴ The faithful proclamation of the word of God is precisely what God demands His shepherds to do (2 Tim 4:1–3). Furthermore, this ministry requires walking alongside other Christians while growing and maturing in the Lord (2 Tim 2:2; Gal 6:1–2; Acts 2:42; Titus 3:1–8). Schnabel writes: “missionaries establish contact with non-Christians, they proclaim the news of Jesus the Messiah and Savior (proclamation, preaching, teaching, instruction), they lead people to faith in Jesus Christ (conversion, baptism), and they integrate the new believers into the local community of the followers of Jesus (Lord’s Supper, transformation of social and moral behavior, charity).”⁵

Thus, a key element in the life and work of a missionary who assumes the role and responsibility of a pastoral position gone global includes the responsibility to teach the Scriptures, shepherd God’s people, equip them for the work of the ministry, and exhort them to launch into positions of ministry (2 Tim 2:2; 1 Pet 5:1–2; Titus 1:5). Faithful Christian ministry in the global context will never be God-honoring where there is a neglect of the faithful teaching of God’s Word (1 Tim 4:13–16).

⁴ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2008), 210.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

Third, no missionary will last long on the mission field who does not carefully plan and deliberately strategize the future weeks, months, and years of the ministry (while fully understanding that God may well change those plans!). The missionary should have a very focused plan regarding his teaching materials, those mature and qualified believers who he wants to mentor, disciple, and equip so they can be in a leadership position in the future, and he wants to spot nonbelievers that he can gently, patiently, and deliberately evangelize while on the field. Missionaries should have the heart of the Apostle Paul who wanted to “bring people to maturity in Christ.”⁶ Paul writes that he is in labor for those to whom he ministers until “Christ is formed in you” (Gal 4:19). As a footnote, the local church supporting that particular missionary benefits greatly by knowing these plans so the church members can pray for the missionary and hold him accountable as to the progress.

Fourth, the biblical example of partnering with other qualified Christians to fulfill a pastoral, shepherding role in the global ministry is indispensable. The missionary needs a team of individuals on the field to co-labor together for the furthering of the gospel, for accountability, to retain an above-reproach status, and for encouragement and fellowship. The missionaries must strive to refrain from confiding in *only* each other at the exclusion of the locals. Without opening up and making oneself vulnerable, the people of that particular community will trust the missionary very little. The example gleaned from the journeys recorded in the Acts of the Apostles shows at the minimum two—and oftentimes many more—believers launching out on a missionary excursion together.

Fifth, a long ministry may not be necessary in every situation but the longer the ministry in a single location the deeper that trust becomes. As Paul stayed in Corinth for a

⁶ Paul Bowers, “Fulfilling the Gospel: The Scope of the Pauline Mission,” *JETS* 30, no. 2 (June 1987): 194.

year and six months on his second journey and then in Ephesus for three years on his third journey (without a furlough!), so missionaries today do well in going to an area or region and striving to plant roots and make that area “home” (unless God leads elsewhere, which he most certainly can do).⁷ This longevity builds integrity, reveals faithfulness, and shows people that the comforts, familiarities, and pleasures of life are worth setting aside to take a message of salvation about Jesus to a particular region and people group so that they may be saved.

Finally, but certainly not least, the missionaries who are sent to the field *must* be those characterized by genuine, selfless, and giving love towards others. A simple test is to ask the question: Does this particular person who desires to be a missionary *currently* evidence a lifestyle of biblical love towards others? If not, the mission field certainly will not change that overnight! This is why it is so important to make sure church leaders must “first be tested” (1 Tim 3:10). The passionate affection and selfless devotion Paul had for the Ephesian elders proves this principle precisely. Paul exhorted them to remain strong in the ministry and then before entering the boat to sail for home they all knelt, prayed, and wept together. This is the result of a ministry grounded in genuine love in action. Missionaries and local churches should accept nothing different.

Though this list is by no means exhaustive it strives to broadly cover the bases in providing some ministry elements that may be gleaned from Paul’s missionary journeys, specifically his third missionary journey. There is no better place to go for missionary principles than the Acts of the Apostles and looking at the ways the early believers accomplished this burning desire to obey Christ and see the nations come to acknowledge

⁷ John B. Polhill states: Paul’s three year ministry in Ephesus followed the pattern already established at Corinth of setting up his mission in the major metropolitan center of a region and working outward from there” (*Acts*, NAC [Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992], 394).

Jesus as Lord and worship Him rightfully as Savior and King. John Piper concludes with a fitting statement: “worship is essentially an inner stirring of the heart to treasure God above all the treasures of the world—

a valuing of God above all else that is valuable
a loving of God above all else that is lovely
a savoring of God above all else that is sweet
an admiring of God above all else that is admirable
a fearing of God above all else that is fearful
a respecting of God above all else that is respectable
a prizing of God above all else that is precious.”⁸

And this is the goal of missions that one may glean from Paul’s example on his third missionary journey, namely, to see individuals around the world treasure God more than anything or anyone this world has to offer because they have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness He offers for their sin and how they can become children and worshippers of the Living God.

⁸ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 206–7.

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