

Fellowship has Responsibility

By Paris Reidhead*

Will you turn, please, to Acts, Chapter 11. 11th Chapter of Acts, beginning with the 19th verse, concluding the Chapter, the 30th verse:

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”

We are dealing week by week with the matter of fellowship, Christian fellowship, New Testament fellowship, that which is to be the foundation upon which the church rests. In the past I have read many articles and books on the subject of the church, and somehow all of them, true as they were, have failed to be implemented in any striking or significant degree in my experience, because it is rather as though we were looking at the shell, we were looking at the form, we were looking at the edifice, rather than looking at that which has made it possible. And so we find that the Word has a great deal to say about the subject of *koinonia* (κοινωνία), fellowship, communion, sharing, and participation. And when we have come individually into a relationship with the Lord Jesus, as we saw this morning, and we'll continue to look at next Lord's Day morning, then we find that there is the grounds of fellowship, there is the possibility of it. The church has a corporate existence because the individuals are in a relationship with the Lord, sharing His life with Him, and thus they can share with each other.

Now we are seeing this sharing in effect, we are seeing it at work, in the portion that has been read for us. Just to remind you of what we saw in beginning measure at least last Sunday Evening, was namely, this, that persecution broke out in Jerusalem regarding Stephen, which caused the believers, the disciples to flee, the apostles abode at Jerusalem, and everywhere they went, they went preaching the Word, and the Lord went with them confirming the Word, with signs and wonders, as we elsewhere read. And so they had the ministry of reconciliation committed to the rank and file of believers. This must come again. We must see this. It must grip your heart and be fixed in your mind, and become the very foundation of your life. If you are in Christ, you are a witness for Christ, and a missionary for Christ. We must see this.

Too long have we been governed and influenced by Rome. Someone has said, “Rome is the mother of us all,” speaking of Protestantism. And in a sense it is as though Rome is the brick wall of which the ivy of Protestantism has tried to climb, keeping itself separate, and yet somehow clinging to it. And in these days I believe the Spirit of God is trying to release the vine of His planting and get it to grow on the trellis of His Word, rather than on the trellis of history. And it is very difficult, because the vine is deeply entwined and in the rocks.

Have you ever tried to take ivy off of a wall? It is very difficult, very difficult indeed. And sometimes you will actually kill chunks of mortar out. And you will split bricks, because these roots have gone in and have gone down. And we have to recognize that the very form in which we are seated tonight, the very building in which we are, the decoration, all are traced back, not to the Word of God, but to Rome. Perhaps we could go and say, “To the Synagogue of our Lord's Day.” This to some degree would be true, but again I would say, Back to Rome.

Now I do not feel in my heart the least iconoclastic. The iconoclast is the icon breaker, and I don't feel that I have that. I am not certainly fighting this arrangement of the pulpit in the center and the people spread around it. I do not believe that we could

change all of this, and change nothing for the better. This would be a simple, mechanical change. The change that we have to make is the change not in architecture, or necessarily in organization to begin with, but it is a change in attitude, a change in your attitude, toward your life, that you are not simply one that is to occupy 22 inches of space in an auditorium regularly and faithfully, though I must admit we miss you when you aren't here to occupy that space and we are delighted when you are. But our reason for it is that if you are here, perhaps you are going to hear from the desk, and from the Word, and by the Spirit, that for the remaining 6 days of the week God wants you as a witness for Jesus Christ. And hearing this, and sensing that the prime evangelistic strategy of the New Testament was gossiping the Gospel on the part of everyone that named the Name of Christ, that this was the means of evangelism. In fact, that you study the tradition of the New Testament and the writings of the Church fathers, you will find that when the believers assemble it was primarily a secret or private meeting. They really didn't know often who was going to do the teaching, frequently they didn't, but they did have a man stationed at the door. Perhaps we could say the janitor was more important than the preacher, because it was his responsibility to invite everyone who did not know the Lord Jesus just not to meet with them. Because you see it was an assembly of the believers, worshipping the Lord, being nourished in the truth and faith, and then they were going out to witness, and the evangelism was to be where the people resided, in the streets, in the market place, in the home. And we find that it is increasingly difficult to get the unsaved into our evangelistic meetings, into our churches, it is increasingly difficult to reach them in what, we would call a traditional American pattern of evangelism. And we are thus being forced by the sheer weight of necessity to rediscover God's plan, God's means of evangelism. And it is this, that where you go, whether it be to work tomorrow, or to visit friends, or wherever it is, you go for whatever task you find necessary to go, but you go as a witness for Jesus Christ.

I'll never forget the experience I had in the tribe in Africa. I had been introduced to a man, and I said, "Oh, you are here on business." You see, at that time the British were in charge of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, as it was called, and they had drawn a line, the 9th parallel, and said there would be no Moslems below that parallel, and no missionaries above it incidentally. Just yesterday I believe it was established in the Sudan, it may have been a few days earlier, but I believe it went into effect yesterday, in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan that hereafter it will be illegal to talk to anyone about religion other than his own. In other words, it will be an offence for which missionaries can be excluded if they talk to pagans about Christ, or talk to Mohammedans about Christ. Or if the pagans talk to the Christians about their religion it will be equally criminal. But of course it isn't criminal for the Mohammedans to talk to anyone about their religion, because this is the State religion, and it has practically been a death knell to all witness in the Sudan.

But I'll never forget that day as I tell you when I met this man, was introduced to him, and he was a Mohammed obviously. "Oh," I said, "you are here on business. Are you? You are here as a trader." He looked at me with the utmost sincerity and earnestness, and he said, "No. My business is to be a messenger of the prophet. I am only here trading to pay expenses. That is just why I am here. I am here as a messenger of the prophet." And this has characterized Islam, and probably is the reason why nine people are being converted to Islam for one being converted to Christ in Africa. Because they have learned that every Muslim is a messenger and a servant of the prophet.

Now they have taken it right out of the Book. Do you view yourself tomorrow as being scattered abroad, not primarily for the necessity of earning a living,—obviously that's important, — but your real reason for being there is to live Christ before these that are without Him, to intercede for those who know Him not, and as opportunity is given when you can control the conversation to witness to them concerning Christ. This is true with your recreation, this is true with other interests, whatever community or society you may belong to. Maybe some of you are members of a Garden Club, or the P.T.A., or the Veterans. Whatever collateral organization you are a part of is to be viewed as a legitimate and proper field of witness. Scattered abroad they went everywhere preaching the Word. Driven by the sword of those who thought they could extinguish the faith, they actually scattered it.

Now we must see this, that the fellowship of witness includes every member of the Body of Christ. I can't say it too frequently, I can't say it too strongly; until you come to the place in your heart of hearts that you realize that evangelism is your responsibility, your responsibility, "He gave evangelists, pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11b). And the evangelists, incidentally, is not the man who comes for a special meeting. He would be fitted into the Scriptural definition of an exhorter. He gave evangelists, church planters, pioneer missionaries, and pastors, all the elders, and teachers, as those having elders with a

special ministry of teaching, “for the perfecting of the saints into the work of the ministry” (Eph. 4:12a). And the work of the ministry is to live Christ before the sinner, intercede for sinners, and witness to them.

Now we must see this. It is imperative that you thus view yourself. You have got to see it if you are to fit into God’s plan for your life and have any part in that which He is doing. This must become a reality. I believe it is imperative if you are to know the fullness of the Spirit. For you remember in Luke, the 13th Chapter I believe it is, or 11th, you have the account of the man who came to his neighbor at midnight, and knocked and demanded bread, asked for bread. And the man, the good man of the house got up, not because they were neighbors, but because the one knocking was concerned about his inability to give bread to the hungry that came to him expecting to be fed. And I believe that we are on the grounds to expect God to meet us in the fullness of Himself and the empowering of His Spirit, when the reason for it is not our own comfort, not our own joy or peace, or blessing, but the reason is that we might have bread to give to the hungry.

Now they went everywhere, and the hand of the Lord was with them; the hand of the Lord will be with you, the hand of the Lord will bless that work. I do not believe that you have to become necessarily the extraverted personality that talks to everyone he meets, gives tracts to everyone he sees. You may, and if you can, and if it true to your nature and personality, and you can do it sincerely then the Lord bless you. We certainly need it. But I think that when you have something so wonderfully real in the Lord Jesus Christ you can talk to people without embarrassment.

It’s amazing you know how in the Cuban crisis it was easy to talk with a perfect stranger about the situation. Wasn’t it? It was something that you shared. Of course, they were as interested as you were, but I think people – I find people – perhaps it is something the Lord is doing in my heart. I am finding it increasingly easy to talk with people about the Lord Jesus Christ, because I am not trying to sell them something. I am not trying to promote something. I am not trying to get them to respond to a formula. I am just trying to get them to converse about the things of the Lord.

Now if you feel that witness is essentially selling Jesus, if you feel it is getting them to sign up on a formula, you are going to be intimidated. You are going to be silenced. In the first place, they won’t do it, and in the second place if they did it would probably be just to accommodate you, and the third place it is not necessarily what God wants. But you see what He is asking for is that He is just real, wonderfully real, and you talk with people. Now you do not have to shoot them full of Scripture verses. Now this is good; it is wonderful to be able to turn to words and say, “Now this is not my opinion, it is what God’s Word says.” But I think it is a little stilted to just talk in Scripture verses when you are dealing with the unsaved. Translate it into the language that they know, and communicate with them. Just talk.

Oh, we ought to read the Sermon on the Mount daily, for a little while at least, until we find out that you can talk about Heaven and hell, and about redemption and grace, in one syllable words as our Lord Jesus did. And so we must see this. I promise you that I am going to dwell on this until the Spirit of God grips our hearts, and we become a witnessing people, and find time, and make time, and take time, just to talk with folk about the Lord, and do it simply, do it directly, do it sincerely, never talk above your experience, and just simply, He is real and you want others to know.

Well, that is what they did, and this is the primary witnessing staff. All right. We find that the fellowship of witnessing was shared by all, but then there was the matter of church responsibility that came back upon the apostles. There was a group established. Whereas you are the one that will probably have the best contact in your neighborhood, in your community, to your friends, to those you meet; you invite me there, and there is a whole wall. I am rather troubled when people—haven’t here, perhaps I should be troubled that they haven’t— but I have often had people say, “Would you come over? Mrs. So and So next door wants to receive the Lord.” “Well go ahead. Lead her to the Lord. You do not need me.” “Oh, I wouldn’t know how.” Well that is what we are here for, and it is always a reflection on the Pastor and teacher if people don’t how to lead them to the Lord, do not know how to get them to close with Christ, and guide them and help them. But this is to be shared by all. Everyone here tonight ought to be able to go out tomorrow, and the remainder of the week, and count on you to be a witness for Christ, a soul winner if you please, to be able to tell others about the Lord Jesus and how to carry on a conversation with others, and to lead and guide, and direct that conversation to the matter of the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ upon them. This is where evangelism is done. I bring you back again as I have repeatedly in the past to the words of Moody when he wrote to that church with that committee in St. Louis that invited him for what then would have been the 3rd citywide campaign in St. Louis which he couldn’t attend because of failing health. And he said, “I have seen 40 years in evangelism, and during this

time I have seen tens of thousands profess faith in Christ. But I have yet to find anyone that has made a profession of faith in Christ and lived ten years thereafter as a consistent Christian, but what there was someone who witnessed to them, and prayed for them before I came to town. I conclude," said he, "the important thing then is not the coming of D. L. Moody but the intercession by and the witness of people that are now living in St. Louis." I think this is true. Fellowship in witness.

But there is something else. There is fellowship in the church. And so the apostles are concerned. They are keeping close touch with what is happening. Letters were sent, messages were carried, and they heard in Jerusalem what God had done, and so they said, Who among us is able to go and to help these people? And so we find fellowship of responsibility. And so Barnabas was sent that he should go as far as Antioch, and it was some distance, and it was a difficult journey. But Barnabas was prepared to go. He was there. He wasn't an Apostle. He was a good man, a wealthy man, and had sold his home and given it to the church. But he came representing the Apostles. And so it ought to be that we see continually developing in the congregation those that are able to take increased responsibility. You are going to discover that your Christian life is not going to become effective on the basis of some tremendous thing. You know a lot of people say they were on the wrong side of the road the wrong time, and that is why they were not successful. No, I believe that if you are going to have a ministry for the Lord it is going to be doing each day the simple tasks that comes. And Barnabas did it. And so there was this fellowship in responsibility that was shared by the Apostles and by Barnabas. But I want you to see something else that is extremely important. Barnabas was a good man, Barnabas was a generous man. He was a man full of the Holy Ghost and faith, and I have proof for it, because Barnabas knew he needed help, and he decided to send for it. And he sent for one that would completely outshine him, one that would completely obscure his ministry, one that was going to put him completely in the background, and one that was safely residing up in Tarsus and wasn't being heard from, and was thus no threat to his prominence. If Barnabas had been interested in promoting himself, he did the most foolish thing he could have done by sending for Saul of Tarsus. But you see, he was a good man, and full of faith, and full of the Holy Ghost. And he was not the least concerned. He was quite prepared I am sure to say with John, He must increase, but I must decrease. And he was quite prepared to send up and bring this man of whom the disciples had been afraid. He had introduced Paul down in Jerusalem to the disciples, and they had withdrawn from him, not at all sure. And Paul, I am confident, drew from his own experience when he wrote to young Timothy and he said, "Lay hands on no man suddenly" (I Tim. 5:22). Don't appoint people too quickly to responsibility. Don't say to this young convert, Oh you are a deacon. Do not say to this young man, you are an elder. "Don't lay hands on people suddenly." Do not ordain them suddenly, because if you do you will get into trouble, and if we do we get into trouble, and so the apostles had sent Saul up to Tarsus and they waited, and they waited, and they waited, and they waited, and they didn't send for him. But you see, there was a time when he was needed, and he was prepared. He had spent three years in post graduate work in the backside of the desert, unlearning, getting ready to minister, and he had been content to just stay in Tarsus. And frankly, I think that he was just running a little tent shop up there. I do not know what the rest of you think. But I just think he had gone completely out of the Pharisee business. He had no living there. And every Jew that day had wise parents and a wiser society that said that they had to, at the time of Bar Mitzvah; learn a trade, because they were afraid you know that something like this would develop. And I think he had a nice little business up in Tarsus, and was sitting there. He had learned much about the Lord in those three years in Arabia. He was having sweet and warm fellowship with the Lord. He had had this revelation of Christ. And he wasn't particularly worried, and he wasn't...he was just available. And the time came when the Spirit of God pressed upon Barnabas' heart, Get ready for Saul.

My friend, if you are ready for His service, there will come a time when God finds a place for you in His service. It is imperative therefore that you should understand that if you are to be used of God you must allow God to do in you what He desires to do. And so three years wasted, someone would say. This brilliant man, this scintillating intellect, this eloquent orator, and here he is just sitting in the desert, and now up in Tarsus; what a waste, what a pity, what a waste. Waste? Waste? Never. Not a waste. The only thing that is a waste in a Christian's life is when he is out of fellowship with God personally. As long as he is in fellowship with God in the Word, whether he is used or not used, that is a profitable time. The arrow that is being polished, and the shaft is being smoothed is not being wasted, because the time will come that only the polished arrow can do the bowman's bidding. And so God had been polishing this shaft.

Is God polishing you? Is He polishing you in some little corner? Has He got you to the place where you are before Him in prayer, and you are asking Him to teach you the Word? and you are feeding? You say, "Well, I don't want to take a Sunday

School Class. It'd mean too much study." My friend, if you are not studying the Word of God without a Sunday School Class, or some other ministry, you are living in disobedience to God, because God says, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,..." (II Tim. 2:15a). And if your study is conditioned only upon your responsibility, you have reached the limit of your service, and you won't have that with blessing very long. You ought to study the Word of God, knowing that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God might be perfect truly furnished unto every good work" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Now you set a limit on your usefulness to God unless you are studying the Word. Now I don't have reference to correspondence courses. I don't have reference to night school. These things are good. I don't have reference to just reading the books of other writers. I am talking to you upon this which is study, which is concentrated thought and attention to the Word of God, till it nourishes your heart and strengthens your spirit, and until you have something to give, something that is burning in you. The Psalmist said, "I meditated in the Lord, and my heart burned within me" (Psa. 39:3). He said, "I had to speak," was Jeremiah's word (Jer. 20:9). If I hadn't spoken, literally I would have blown a fuse. The pressure was building up to the place where I could not stand it. Something was going to go.

Are you doing that? Saul of Tarsus was. How could he have said, "Study to show thyself approved unto God," if he had not been studying to show himself approved unto God. He said to Timothy, "Give attention to reading, meditate in these things." (I Tim. 4:15). Why? Because that is what he had done, and he had done it in the Arabian desert, and he had done it in Tarsus, and so when the Spirit of God prompted Barnabas, this sweet and tender man, this son of consolation, You need help Barnabas, you need someone to share with you, your gifts as they are aren't adequate. Don't you see the fellowship of the church? The church needed every man as a witness. The apostles needed Barnabas. Now Barnabas needed Saul. Oh, how marvelous it is that every member of the Body is absolutely dependent upon every other member. And my dear friend, there is something that you can do in the plan of God better than anyone else, if you are willing to be available to Him. There is some life you can touch, some place you can fill, some work you can do, and only you. And you are preparing for it by your attitude tonight, as you listen, and by what you are going to do before you go to bed, and what you are going to do when you wake up tomorrow, and what you are going to do on the subway going to your work.

You tell me what you are thinking about, you tell me where your mind runs when you release it from the task at hand, and I'll tell you the kind of a Christian ministry and life you are going to have. "For as a man thinketh in his heart so is he" (Pro. 23:7).

And Saul of Tarsus is preparing, just by being at Tarsus. And then the Spirit of God says, Barnabas, you need him. Oh, you need him. And Barnabas didn't say, Oh, my, look what he will do. He will obscure me. No, you see he was full of the Holy Ghost, and he was full of faith, and his only concern was, Who can God use for the blessing of these people? Who can be God's servant? Who is the one that can speak so...he said he was willing to go as far as Antioch, but you know he went further. He went as far as Tarsus. He was prepared to go as far as God would lead him. And so he went on up to Tarsus for to seek Saul. Because Saul was important in the plan of God. And when he had found him, I like that, he went — Where is Saul? Well, I don't know. He has come back from the desert. Well where is he? Well, he is up there in Tarsus somewhere.

I remember a few years ago a young man in the ministry went to a public relations company in Chicago and paid them 5 hundred or a thousand dollars in order to make his name a household word. Well, they made it a household word all right, but there was not much else beside. That is all. He got his name around. I have forgotten what it was now. But for a while it was quite well known. And he paid a thousand dollars for it to this firm.

Well, dear friend, you don't need to do that. The only thing you need to do is just be at your Tarsus, with a heart filled with love for God, and heart filled with burden for His people, and heart and mind filled with the truth of God, and your life poured out, and in due course God will have some Barnabas that will seek you where you are for the ministry that God has for you.

I remember talking to a parent down in the South. He said, "My son is going to Bible School, and I am just so distressed that there is no place, no church in the Alliance for him." I said, "I am not worried about that. This does not concern me in the least, Brother. The only thing that I am concerned about is that your son be prepared for any place in the Alliance, or elsewhere. For if he has the preparation, God has the place. And the preparation isn't a diploma. The preparation is a relationship to the Lord that is so vital, and so warm, so rich, so continuous, that wherever one is there is something to share."

Walter Louis Wilson, riding in my car in Minneapolis, going to a service at the 1st Presbyterian Church, looked at me, and he said, "Brother, do you sense what I have? So few of God's dear people have anything to give." He said, "Every day before I leave, I say, 'Lord, give me something worm, real and vital, that if I touch a hungry heart I can share with them, if I touch a needy heart I can help comfort them.'" And he said, "There are just so few that have anything from the Lord."

Do you, when you go out in the morning, do you just fill your knapsack. Lord, is there something that you have given me for a burdened heart? Is there something you have given for a perplexed heart? Something you have given me for a lost heart? And I have something to share? I am so glad that little boy had thoughtfulness enough to bring the five loaves and two fishes, aren't you? Do you go out that was to find the hungry that God can bless? Well you see, when you do there is always some opportunity, and you will have an opportunity if you have something to use in it. I think sometimes God keeps us from opportunities, because He doesn't want to embarrass us. But when we have something from Him, we have certainly a place from Him to share it.

And thus He will beat a way, He will beat a path. He'll come. He'll come. I have just been groaning in my heart, because I had to fly a few weeks ago over Nebraska. Out there, south of Lincoln, is that dear little woman. Oh, how I have wanted her to come and meet you, Gladys Dieterly. She is one of the dearest people that ever breathed. She loves the Lord. I have to take that little booklet, Christ in the Midst, every once in a while just to sort of feed my own soul. And when I was flying from here to Denver and back, the great grief was that I just couldn't find time enough to stop off, and go and sit in her room in that little Old Folks Home somewhere out on the Nebraska plains and say, "Miss Dieterly what has the Lord been telling you lately?" Because I have never met her but what she had something warm, and fresh to share with a hungry heart. And people still beat a path to her door, because they have never been turned away empty. As long as she breaths, she is going to breathe out something that is worthwhile for the Lord.

All right. That should be you. But notice. It was not only that Saul was ready, and God had a place for Him, and he was included in the fellowship of the ministry with Barnabas, but it was something else. "It came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people." I do not know when it will come, perhaps it will never come again, but you know one of the best things could be for revival would be to go back to what happened a few decades ago in America when they started a meeting, and they didn't say when they were going to quit. I get a little amused when I drive through the South, and I don't see it so much up here, drive down south and it says, Revival, beginning November 15th, closing December 2nd. They have it all arranged with God, haven't they. It's nice. It's neat. They can turn it on and turn it off, like you can the hot water in the hotel. Comes out boiling, goes off, all fixed. Well the only thing is, they are having a meetin'. One preacher said, "Have you ever run a tent meetin', Brother?" I said, "No, I never run a tent meetin'." He said, "Oh it is great joy. You ought to do it sometime." Well, you know, I really feel that if we will come back to where the fathers were, and we say, "This is God's man, this is God's time." Maybe we can do that here some time. God will send us a Saul, a man anointed, and he'll just stay with us, and we'll meet like Dr. Simpson did, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, and just go on, and go on, and go on, and go on, go on until "Heaven breaks and God comes down our souls to meet and glory crowns the mercy seat"¹.

Now that is what happened here. They went and got Saul, and they just started, just started, and stayed for a whole year, and he taught much people. Isn't that lovely?

Jim Stewart, when he was here with us in 1957, in our missionary convention had a kind of a ministry. James isn't well understood in this country, because all the anointing of God seems to be for Europe, but he was in ministry down in South Germany and Austria, and the Spirit of God said to him and his wife Ruth, Go north, go north. And they went up to Copenhagen. Go north. And they went on up to Oslo. Go north. And they went on up. And finally they got up almost to the Arctic Circle, to Trondheim, and as he was there, he said, "Are there any believers?" And some one said, "Yes, so and so is a believer." They went over. He said, "Brother, God has been leading me from down in the middle of Europe here, and I don't know why. He has been telling me to go north. My name by the way is James *Louis* Stewart." And the man looked at him as

¹ "From Every Stormy Wind That Blows" By Hugh Stowell, 1828.

tears came to his eyes. He said, "O Brother Stewart, we have been praying God would send you. We have been asking God to give us revival. We need it. We have been asking Him. And we did not know how to get in touch with, where you were. But there is a little group of us that are meeting." So they met in the back room of a church for two weeks there, and they just broke before the Lord, melted before Him, laid hold of Him. And then they announced to the Christians a little letter went out to the Christians of the area that, "We are meeting for fellowship in the Word of God to see what God has to say to His Church for revival." And so they met in a little church building, and soon that was pretty well filled. Three, four weeks had gone. Then they said, "And now we want to bring out the members of churches who are professing, nominal Christians that they might see the wonders in Jesus," so another announcement went out. And it was about three or four weeks that they met, until there was an evidence of the moving of God. And finally they said, the believers, said, "Oh, we must take the auditorium." And they got the largest hall in Trondheim and they went on for about another month, and it was filled. At six o'clock it would be filled. They didn't go home to eat dinner. They came and sat there. When Brother Stewart would come in at 7 o'clock there would be a service in progress, led by the Holy Ghost. Someone would start a song, and they would sing. Someone would get up to pray. Someone would start to weep and come and kneel to receive Christ. And sometime he couldn't even preach. But you know the last day when it was clear that God had finished, the Mayor and the City Council of Trondheim declared it a city holiday, all businesses closed, and morning, afternoon, and evening, they filled, and filled, and filled the auditorium again, and again, and God brought revival to Trondheim. I am wondering if that isn't going to happen here.

When God brought this man down whose heart had been filled with the love of God, and the truth of God, and he taught much people—I think it is an oversimplification. I think God met them, because there was a fellowship, fellowship, a witness that gathered the believers, a fellowship of the apostles that sent instruction to give name and strength to the church, a fellowship of Barnabas which reached out to find the man whom God would use at that time and in that place. There was fellowship, there was *koinonea*, there was sharing.

And then Paul comes with a deep yearning, and a burning longing that the people to whom God had sent him should have everything he had. He would hold back nothing, because he wanted to leave Pauls there. He wanted them to know the Lord as he knew Him. And God had in that place what He wanted.

But notice the fellowship. All the way, the sharing, the communion, the responsibility, the vision, the burden, mutually carried. Is this not the secret for revival of the work of God? Isn't this it? It has to be yours. You have to carry it to start with.

Then of course there is the whole church. And finally there are those that are the responsible agents that God will use. I believe that here is a pattern for the blessing of the local church, here is a pattern for revival. I want all of you to set by in your calendars February 17th to the 20th. We are going to have the privilege of having Armin Gesswein with us for four nights. Just four. But I believe God wants to do something. We talked with him on the telephone the other day, and Armin Gesswein who was a pastor on Long Island, but went to Norway. He saw God work in great revival blessing. Armin Gesswein has been living with a burning, groaning, longing heart for God to get revival, and get a church that He could bless, and that He could use. You set those days aside. He is coming to us just for those four days. Let's ask God to meet us and prepare us, for something that will be wholly His. We thought perhaps it would be the week later, but it had to be this week for two reasons, his and others, and so we will remember that. I believe, dear friends, that God is wanting to do for us here what He did there, but it falls on you. Each one carries a responsibility. It is on the eldership, it is on the pastor, it is on the man whom God will send to us, anointed to minister. We bear it jointly. We share it together. And so I feel that we have here a pattern, a pattern that shows us clearly that the Holy Ghost has a place in the ministry, and a part for every one of us. No one is excluded, no one is overlooked, and no one is unimportant. Some will do different works. Paul had one ministry that Barnabas didn't have. Barnabas had a ministry the apostles didn't have. The laymen had a ministry the apostles didn't have. Each had his place. And you have your place.

May God show us this is the nature of fellowship. The beginning of Paul's ministry was when he had been prepared to serve, and God had prepared a place in which he could serve. The beginning of every ministry is the same. So if you will allow the Lord to lead you into the fellowship with Himself that He desires, into the fellowship and understanding of the Word that He desires, so that you have something to share, something that you can commune, with others, then I think the Scripture gives us every reason to believe that God has a ministry for you. Let us bow our hearts together in prayer.

Are you willing to just find your place in God's plan? Are you willing to take Him at His Word when He said, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, and meditate, give attendance to reading?" Are you willing to be to the Lord Jesus what He has planned and desired? You see, you are very important. Everything seems to hang or fall on you. Oh, the church can go on without you, but it won't be the church, because you have a part in it, a place in it. And so you are going to have to fulfill your responsibility that falls heavily upon you. Are you prepared to say, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And then to do what He shows you?

Our Heavenly Father, we thank and praise Thee that Thou hast given us this Word that shows us the pattern of Thy working, and the plan of Thy ministry, shows us the place of every believer, the responsibility of the eldership, the particular ministries that Thou didst choose, and those that have special ministries of teaching, and exhortation, [Tape ends] revival ministry. And we thank Thee for this. We are grateful to Thee for it. And we are asking that somehow the Holy Spirit will just so bind this portion of Thy Word upon our minds and our hearts that it will so grip us, that we will see more clearly tonight perhaps than ever before how we fit into what Thou art doing. Maybe, our Father, that the Barnabas that knows the Sauls whom Thou wilt use is any one of this company. It may be, our Father, that the group that are to be taught are the ones that are to be won just by the folks seated here tonight. Perhaps it is, Lord, that the ones that will be met and blessed in these meetings that we are planning with our Brother Gesswein will be the one to whom someone will witness tomorrow. Someone will bring to know the Lord Jesus Christ before Wednesday. Grant, our Father, that we shall realize that this is a lovely, a wonderful adventure, of obedience, that every step has with it new unfoldings of Thy grace and plan. Lord, take the dullness and the greyness out of our minds and hearts, and off our tongues, and give to us that clarity of mind and that alertness of heart, and that sensitiveness of spirit, that makes every day a wonderful adventure of obedience, and instead of complaining and finding fault, and becoming bitter, and sour, let the joy of the Lord become our strength, let the beauty of holiness be upon us, and the wonder of the Lord Jesus Christ be so thrilling to our hearts that we become incandescent at the thought that we are laborers together with Thee. We have everything, our Father, in Christ. Now might He have all He wishes in us. Bring to the hearts of those, seated so patiently, thoughtfully before Thee now just that commitment, that abandonment. Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do. Thou wilt tell them, Father, and we believe they will do it. And so bind the Word to our hearts, release us now to go, to meditate upon it, and to use our time profitable, and grant Lord that even in the hour to follow in the College and Career Group that there shall be such a sense of Thy presence and such joy in Thee that everyone shall rejoice that they shared in this. Lead us into true fellowship. Lead us to understand it. And God our Father, bring it to pass, for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And now before we close the prayer, I want to speak to you that have special need. Perhaps God has been showing you something in your life with which you must deal, perhaps there is sin, and backbiting of heart with which you must deal. You know, God knows. We are here to pray with you, to help you. Please, don't hurry. If there is any way that we can be of help, we wish to. Make known your need. There is someone that will pray with you, someone who will open the Word to you. Just let us know.

Now let us stand for the Benediction. "Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding, abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:20-21).

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle, New York City on Sunday Evening, December 2, 1962 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.