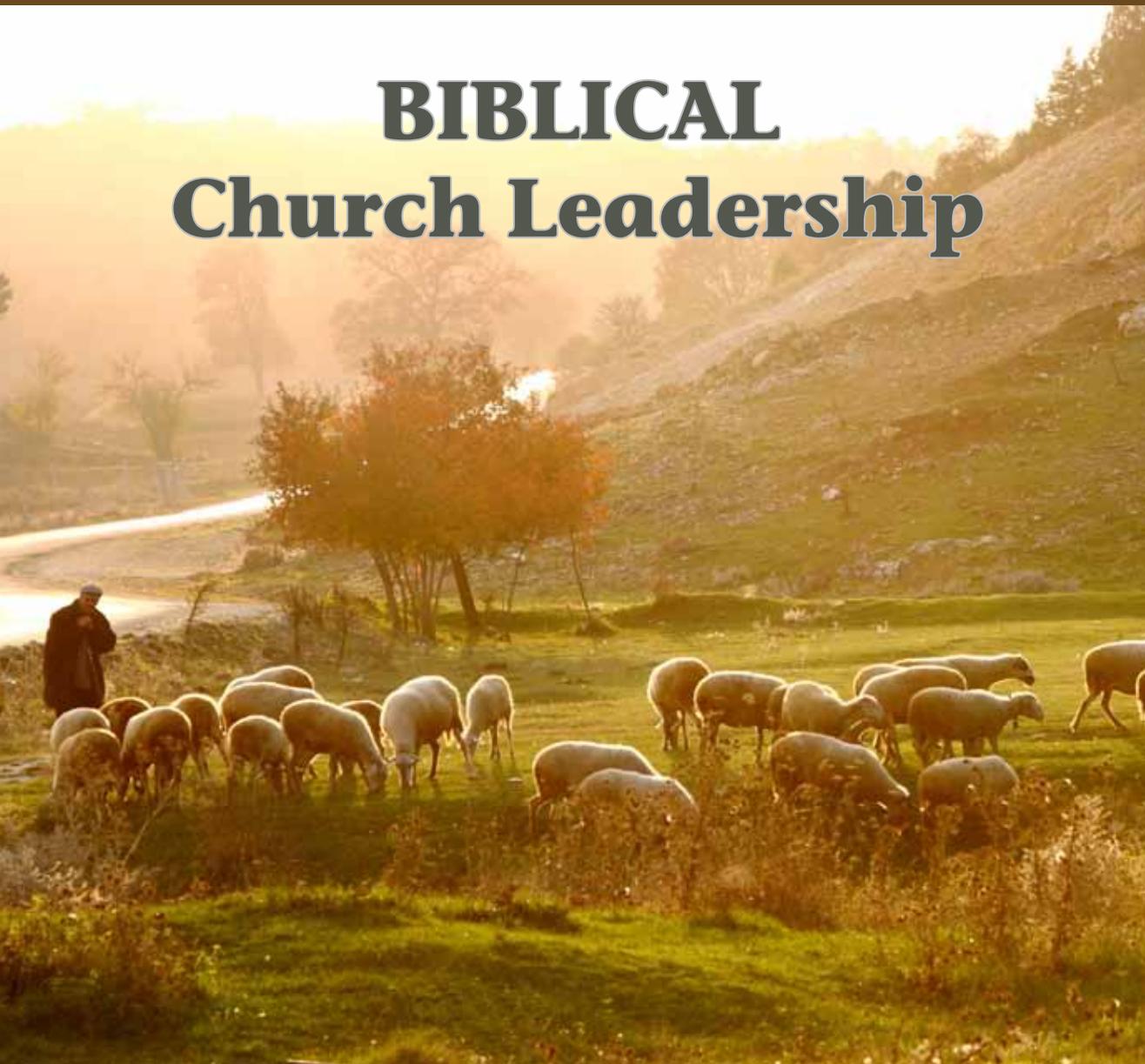
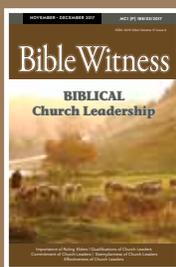


Bible Witness

BIBLICAL Church Leadership



Importance of Ruling Elders | Qualifications of Church Leaders
Commitment of Church Leaders | Exemplariness of Church Leaders
Effectiveness of Church Leaders



Editor
Prabhudas Koshy

Assistant Editor
Ho Kee How

**Publishing & Circulation
Co-ordinator**
Lok Kwok Wah

Technical Editors
Adrienne Foo,
Jenny Lok, Lok Kwok Wah,
Mah Lean Choo

Layout
Kenneth Wong

Children's Page Illustration
Andronicus Koshy

Publisher
Bible Witness Media Ministry of
Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church
Singapore

Printer
Ee Tai Press Pte Ltd

Mailing Address
Bible Witness Media Ministry
510 Geylang Road, #02-06
Singapore 389466

Tel: (65) 6741 1910 **Fax:** (65) 6741 1016

E-mail: bwmm.gbpc@gmail.com

Website: www.biblewitness.com



CONTENTS

Biblical Church Leadership

- 3** Editorial
- 4** Importance of Ruling Elders
- 10** Qualifications of Church Leaders
- 15** Commitment of Church Leaders
- 18** Exemplariness of Church Leaders
- 22** Effectiveness of Church Leaders

The above articles are contributed by Rev Dr Prabhudas Koshy, Pastor of Gethsemane B-P Church and Editor of Bible Witness.

Children's Page

- 25** Bible Trivia - Exodus 33 *Sarah Yong*
- 26** Eric Henry Liddell (1902 - 1945)
"From an Olympian to a Missionary"
- Part 3 *Jenny Lok*

The cover picture is taken from
<https://lloydstebbins.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/shepherd.jpg>

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

The magazine is distributed free from 2006 onwards. "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8).
Postage and handling charges for 2 years (12 issues):

SURFACE MAIL	Singapore/Malaysia S\$10.00	Other Countries S\$14.00
AIR MAIL	Asia S\$26.00	Other Countries S\$34.00

International bank draft, money order or postal order drawn on a Singapore bank in Singapore dollars may be made payable to "Bible Witness".

LOVE-GIFT

Bible Witness Media Ministry welcomes love-gifts from readers to meet the cost of publishing and distribution. The Ministry also sends the magazine freely to churches in poorer countries. Hence your generous support is much needed and greatly appreciated.

USE OF ARTICLES

The articles may be freely used for non-commercial purposes, so long as they are quoted verbatim, and the writer as well as the source identified.

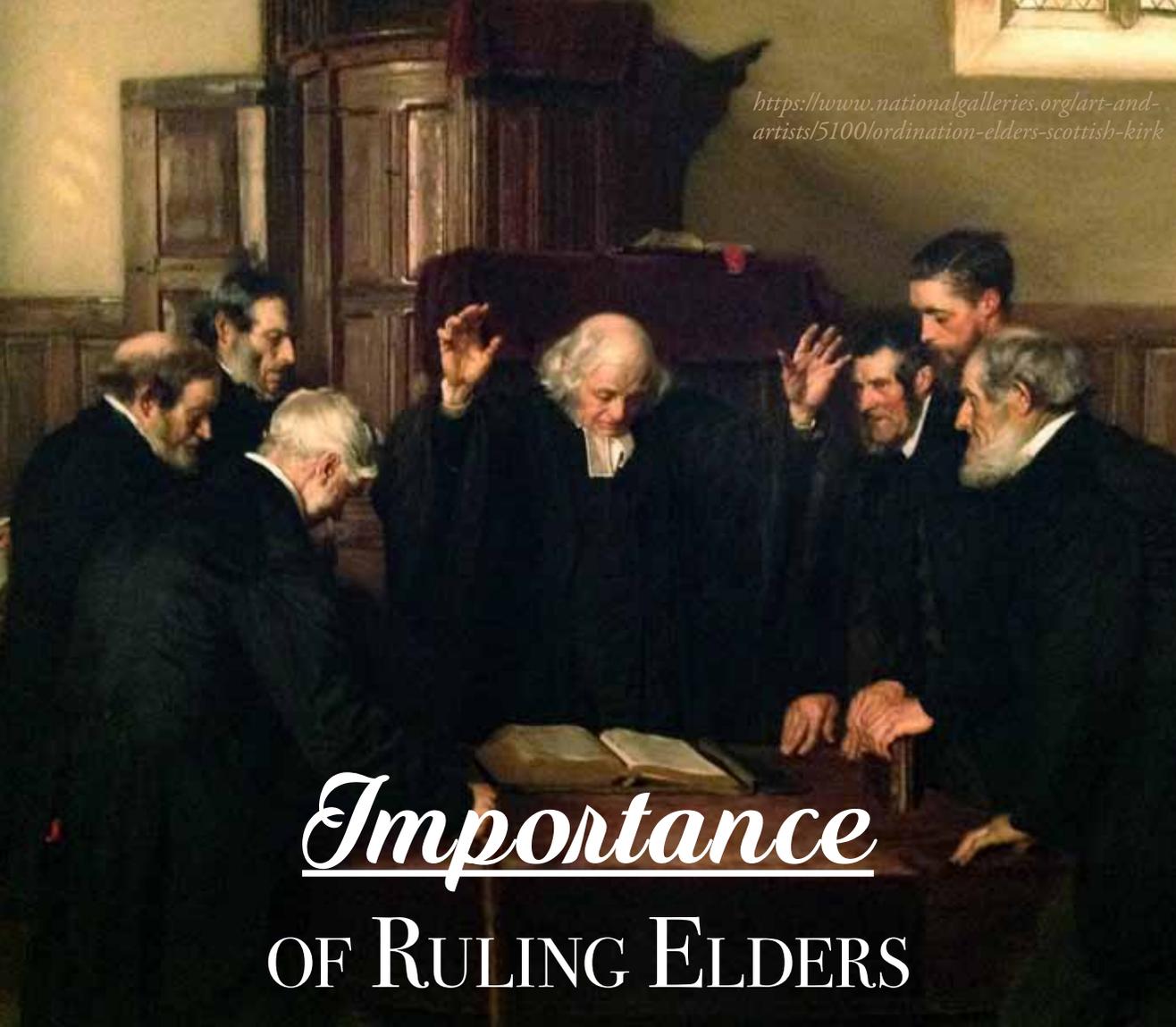
EDITORIAL

Our Lord Jesus Christ had said, “I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18). True to His word, He has been building His church down through the ages. After His ascension, He sent the Holy Spirit upon His apostles and the early believers to unite them and to build up the church. The church, being the household of God, is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20). As the fledgling post-Pentecost church spread far and wide, the congregations were commanded to be well-organised under the leadership of pastors and elders, who were assisted by deacons. The apostle Paul wrote about this in his epistles to Timothy and Titus, where the miraculous gifts and offices of the apostles and prophets are not mentioned as the leadership offices of the church. Instead, the focus was on elders and deacons.

The offices of the elders and deacons are open only to godly and well-instructed men in the church (1 Timothy 3:1-13). Faithfulness to God and fervency to do the work of the Lord are expected in all who take up the offices of the church. Consider the words of the apostles to the Jerusalem church when they called on the church to select seven men to oversee the diaconal (service) ministry to care for the widows and the needy – “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business” (Acts 6:3). Clearly, spiritual and moral requirements are deemed necessary to fulfil the various roles of leadership in the church.

Hence, our prayer as we publish this issue of Bible Witness is that churches of our time will be committed to biblical spiritual leadership. The church without biblical leadership is in great peril! If the church leadership would fall into the hands of men who are not preoccupied with the glory of God, people in the congregation will surely be led astray. Let us therefore pray for men of wisdom and faithfulness to fill the offices of our churches. May the Lord be pleased to use the articles in this magazine to stir men of His choice to serve Him and His people with humility, holiness, fervency and faithfulness.

Prabhudas Koshy



Importance OF RULING ELDERS

To understand the biblical importance of ruling elders in the church, it is pertinent for us to recognise the necessity, nature and duties of ruling elders.

Necessity of Ruling Elders

In the apostolic times, when the Gospel spread through Judaea, Samaria, Asia Minor and in other regions, churches were formed. Their proper spiritual and administrative care became a great concern to the apostles. Paul then wrote to Titus regarding what should be done for the proper management of the church – “that

thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee” (Titus 1:5).

The apostolic instruction is that the appointment of elders as church officers who oversee her affairs and ministries is vital to an orderly, well-managed church. The ordaining of elders is an imperative. It is on no account to be omitted. Paul’s counsel was that Titus would go through city by city (wherever there was a church) and ordain a body of elders in each congregation (cf. 1 Timothy 3, where Paul also mentioned the appointment of

deacons, who are to be assistants to the elders). The elders, then, are to rule and organise the church.

The basic biblical pattern for the proper organisation of a local church is that elders (plural in number) ought to be ordained from within the congregation, in accordance with the biblical requirements of abilities and standards of behaviour. This is corroborated by Acts 14:23 – “And when they (Paul and Barnabas) had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.”

Nature of Ruling Elders

Spiritually Pious Men

Elders ought to be men of sound moral and spiritual character. Their qualifications are plainly laid down in the Word of God, as attested to by Titus 1:6-9 – “(being) blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

A similar requirement of irreproachable conduct is also given in 1 Timothy 3:2-7. “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how

shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

The passages quoted above lay special emphasis upon high morals and sound spiritual abilities and character. So, every man who is considered for the office of eldership ought to be blameless in life and steadfast in the faith. He should be a man of wisdom and discretion. Neither wealth nor social position can qualify a man to be a ruler in God’s house. Holiness must characterise his pursuit of life so that he may be an example to the flock. Devotion to God – piety – should characterise every ruling elder. He must be a godly, spiritually-minded man. His piety is an indication of the measure of his strength. All his duties require godliness, without which all his skills and capabilities are of little use in the governing of the church. If he is truly godly, then he will truly influence the church for the glory of God. It is the elders’ godly influence that is instrumental in directing the proper conduct of the church.

Capable and Competent Men

Though piety is indispensable, it is not the only qualification. Not every church member who is devout is qualified to be an elder of the church. A candidate to the office of eldership must also be a man of intelligence, practical wisdom, experience and no mean administrative capacity. The best and wisest godly men in the congregation should be selected. From time to time, the Board of Elders will have to deal with matters of utmost gravity and grapple with perplexing problems. In such situations, the ablest of minds and the most knowledgeable of men are to be

found among the rulers of the church. It goes without saying that men who lack excellent mental capacity would not be able to handle such duties. Thus, we should thank God for capable men whom God gives to us in the church leadership. In the same vein, we must also pray for more competent men for the eldership.

The apostle Paul also insisted that an elder should be “apt to teach”. This is not necessarily a reference to public and official instruction, for ruling elders are not those who are called to labour in the Word as teaching elders (cf. 1 Timothy 5:17). What this means is that there must, however, be present in them the ability to communicate and defend sound doctrines of the Bible. Elders must take every opportunity available to them to increase in the knowledge of God’s Word. They should be diligent and faithful students of God’s Word so that they may teach in the Bible class, and guide worshippers and inquirers in the wisdom of God’s Word.

Elders who are “apt to teach” ought to have the competence and purposefulness to teach true doctrine and to refute false doctrine. Hence Paul’s instruction to the Ephesian elders: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For ... grievous wolves (shall) enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also ... shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:28-30). This role of the elders is of vast importance in preventing the church from departing from the truth of God’s Word and in defending the church against errors of all kinds that will creep in through false teachers!

Duties of Elders

When a person is ordained as an elder of the church, he is being entrusted with God-given duties to fulfil. His ordination is a public acknowledgment of his calling and equipping by the Holy Spirit to carry out the God-given duties of an elder. Following is a brief discussion of some of the major biblical duties of an elder.

Oversight of the Church

In conjunction with the pastor (the teaching elder), the elders take the oversight of the spiritual and administrative matters of the church. Elders are exhorted in 1 Peter 5:2 to “feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind”. The word “feed” translates a Greek word (*poimainō*) which denotes the duties of a shepherd towards the flock. An elder is to be like a shepherd who cares for the flock of God in the local church where he is appointed to the office. His duty of shepherding means that he must willingly and readily “take the oversight” of the congregation. Exercising oversight – as denoted by the Greek word (*episkopeo*) – would mean that he cares for the nurture, protection and guidance of God’s people like a shepherd (Acts 20:28a).

Every elder must co-labour with the pastor and fellow elders to provide the necessary spiritual and administrative oversight. He must work with genuine pastoral concern for the flock of God. He must know the affairs of the flock and oversee their spiritual well-being. As part of the Board of Elders (or presbytery), he must personally and jointly labour to watch over the flock of God. The wise words of Solomon are applicable to every elder: “Be thou diligent to know the state

of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds” (Proverbs 27:23).

The oversight of the flock would include visiting the poor, the sick and the afflicted. The elder must be willing and prepared to attend to the spiritual and temporal needs of the needy among the congregation. In fact, Scripture encourages the needy to call on elders – “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (James 5:14). As under-shepherds of Christ’s flock, every elder ought to manifest Christ’s compassion and care, with much love and tenderness to His suffering sheep. He may minister to the afflicted with an appropriate hymn, or the reading of a portion of Scripture, or a brief prayer.

That is not all. He must also attend to the backsliding members of the church in order to correct them and nurture them back. Every elder must prayerfully work to avoid the spiritual decline of the congregation. He should admonish members who neglect the fellowship gatherings and sacraments, which are means of grace that are essential to spiritual growth and health. Without proper supervision, the members of the church can slowly slip into spiritual lethargy and degeneration. Every elder must labour to avoid having members of the church degenerate and fall away unnoticed. Though the pastor bears much of the responsibility of the pastoral care, elders are also called to share with him the pastoral supervision of the church.

Teaching of the Church

According to 1 Timothy 3:2, elders must be “apt to teach”. In Titus 1:9, elders are expected to be “holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort

and to convince the gainsayers.” The Greek word (*parakaleō*) translated as “exhort” can also mean “encourage”, “comfort”. Thus, the ruling elder’s teaching – though not formal or on a full-time basis like that of the pastors who are teaching elders – includes informal counselling and words of encouragement. The elder should also be able to “convince the gainsayers” by sound doctrine (Titus 1:9). The Greek word (*antilegō*) translated as “gainsayers” refers to “those who speak against”. Hence, elders must acquaint themselves with the biblical doctrines and practices of the church, that they may give a sound response to those who object to the doctrines of the Word of God.

This, of course, does not mean that every elder must be equally knowledgeable and gifted to perform the task of teaching. It is abundantly clear that there are some elders (being pastors) who are specially tasked to “labour in the word and doctrine” (1 Timothy 5:17), while others focus mainly on ruling the church. However, every elder must be able to communicate sound biblical knowledge. To fulfil such an important duty, elders must have a constant, prayerful commitment to equip themselves with sound theological knowledge. They must equip themselves to teach competently in Bible studies and to answer the inquirers wisely and adequately. They must labour to both propound sound doctrines and defend them for the purity of the church.

Rule of the Church

Elders are expected to rule well, and such are worthy of double honour (1 Timothy 5:17). As rulers, they are not to be “lords over God’s heritage” (1 Peter 5:3a), but rather as fathers who rule their household (1 Timothy 3:4). They teach the Word

of God (Hebrews 13:7), and labour to admonish the church (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:12). They watch for the souls of God’s people (Hebrews 13:17b), and lead them by example (1 Peter 5:3b; cf. 1 Timothy 4:12). As men entrusted with responsibility for the well-being of the souls of the people, they will have to give an account to the Lord for them (Hebrews 13:17b).

Elders ought to be in charge of the admission, spiritual nurture and discipline of the members of the church. Their collective supervision as rulers of the church is crucial to maintaining the purity of the church. The special attention of the elders to catechise those who seek membership and to ascertain them to be credible followers of Christ is most needful. It is also their duty to admonish (with a loving and firm spirit) members of the church who walk disorderly. They are expected to carry out their roles as rulers with much diligence and labour (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:12).

In order to rule well, the elders also have important duties to perform in the meetings of the Board of Elders and the Church Session. In those meetings where the situation and needs of the church will be considered, the elders should confer together to find the best biblical way to

manage matters at hand for the benefit of the church. Hence, elders must have a commitment to attend all such meetings and to participate in the discussions concerning the administration of the church with eagerness and patience. As the Board and Session meetings cannot be held in a hurried or perfunctory manner, much forbearance, tolerance and endurance are expected. Elders must not think of themselves as mere advisers in the Board or the Session, but as co-labourers together with the pastor to shepherd the flock of God. In this respect, elders must also be careful to avoid any misunderstandings, quarrels or alienation among themselves.

The importance of godly, able and dutiful ruling elders in taking the oversight of the church cannot be overemphasised. The apostle Paul knew this full well, hence he was not at all apologetic to write: “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour” (1 Timothy 5:17a). Indeed, such honour would be gladly rendered by the discerning church which recognises that only when the elders – who are the rulers of the church – endeavour to work together in sincerity and faithfulness, in harmony and love, and with zeal and patience can the church be effective in bearing a glorious testimony for the Lord.

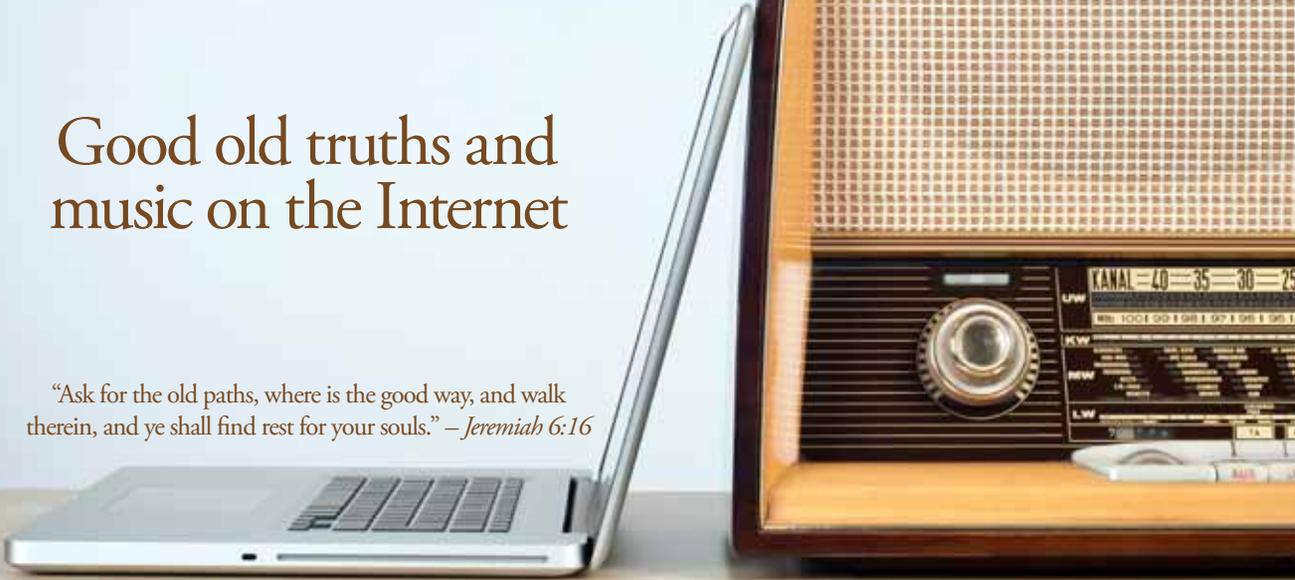
Elders ought to be in charge of the admission, spiritual nurture and discipline of the members of the church. Their collective supervision as rulers of the church is crucial to maintaining the purity of the church.

Bible Witness Web Radio

Tune in to www.biblewitness.com/webradio

Good old truths and music on the Internet

“Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” – *Jeremiah 6:16*



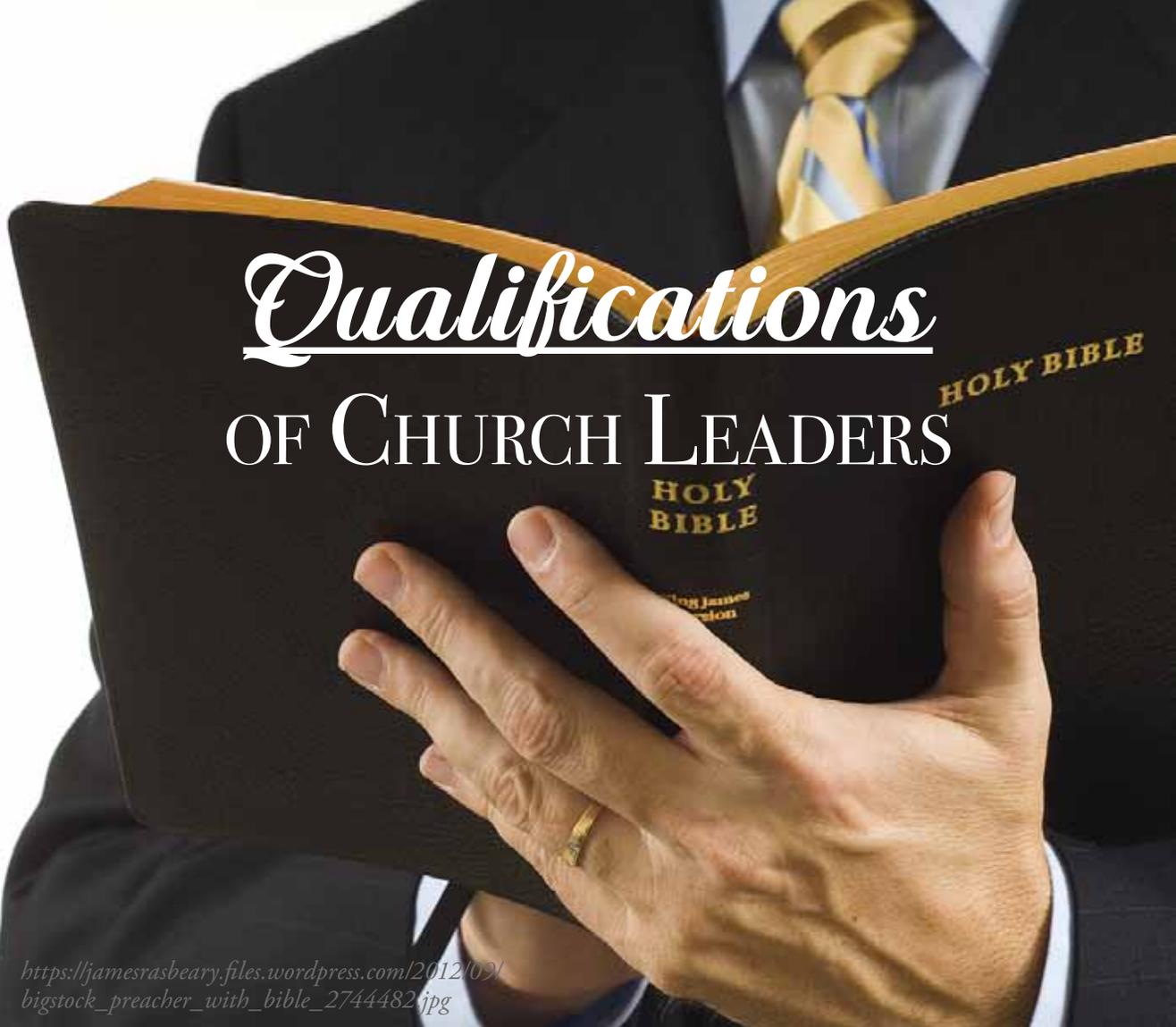
LUNCH HOUR BIBLE STUDY

Bible Witness Bookroom
Block 531 Upper Cross Street
#02-48 Hong Lim Complex
Singapore 050531

- Present Topic: The Book of Job
- Teacher: Prabhudas Koshy
- Every Wednesday @ 1.00pm-1.30pm
- LIVE on <http://www.biblewitness.com/bookroom/lunchtime-bible-study.html>

WELCOME to a time of soul-nourishing learning of God's Word!





Qualifications OF CHURCH LEADERS

https://jamesrasbeary.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/bigstock_preacher_with_bible_2744482.jpg

God's directive concerning the character of those who aspire to serve in the offices of the church is given in Titus 1:6-9: – "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound

doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (cf. 1 Timothy 3:1-7).

Before men can be appointed to the offices of the church, these biblical qualities (specifically those delineated in vv. 6-8) are to be found in their lives. Though there will be men in the church who may think of themselves as fit to be leaders and ready to take on great responsibilities, they must be examined over a period of time by the leaders and the church. Only when they are found equipped with those biblical qualities, upon examination (which would require the evaluation and approval of

both the leaders and members of the congregation), ought they to be appointed to leadership position. This article will briefly examine the respective biblical qualities required of church leaders.

Blameless Life [v. 6a]

Twice this word “blameless” appears in Titus 1:6-9 (vv. 6, 7). Living above reproach must be the consistent characteristic of a leader. “Blameless” cannot refer to sinless perfection because no man is without sin. Rather, it speaks of a consistent life of spiritual maturity. Its similar usage in 1 Timothy 3:2 emphasises that “nothing in the person would cause an opponent to make a damaging charge against him, thus the person is irreproachable or unassailable” (Alexander Strauch). There must be a commitment to moral and spiritual reputation. Holiness and submission to God’s Word should characterise the leader, so he must be free from damaging and offensive behaviour and lifestyle.

In verse 7, Paul said, “For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God”. A leader or an elder is God’s steward and, therefore, the overseer of God’s household. He is entrusted with God’s household. God’s interests in the church are his main concern and he acts accordingly. He needs to be morally and spiritually fit to fulfil God’s demands for His invaluable possession. His duty is to set an example to those who are called to be saints.

As the Christian author Alexander Strauch aptly puts it, “What the churches of Jesus Christ need in the way of leadership is men of deep inner spiritual and moral character. The best systems, laws, and constitutions are impotent without men who are just, devout, lovers of what is good, sensible, self-controlled, forbearing, free

from love of money, uncontentious and faithful keepers of God’s Word. These are precisely the qualities that God requires of those who lead His people”.

Sexual Morality [v. 6b]

An utmost virtue of a leader that characterises him as a blameless person is that he is “the husband of one wife” (v. 6b). This literally means he is a “one-wife” husband, or “one-woman” man. Paul is not forbidding a man from marrying if his wife dies. Rather, he is speaking of the sexual purity of a leader. A leader should not be a flirtatious, promiscuous or an adulterous man.

The phrase “husband of one wife” therefore implies loyalty and faithfulness to his wife. It prohibits divorce, adultery, polygamy, and suchlike. The leader must be a faithful spouse. As one writer said, “Marriage is the most probing test of a man’s character and beliefs.” This thought is consistent with what Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:5, “For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?” The task of building godly marriages and strong families in the church necessitates a good marriage history in every church leader’s life. In these days of increasing sexual immorality, this quality of being committed to the sanctity of marriage and keeping oneself from sexual sin is to be highly stressed.

Good Family Leadership [v. 6c]

Another essential spiritual quality mentioned by the apostle Paul is that of “having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly” (v. 6c). In 1 Thessalonians 2:11, the apostle Paul described his leadership ministry with these words – “we exhorted and comforted and charged every

one of you, as a father doth his children". A leader's role is much like a father's role in the house. Since the leader is to be a loving parent to the family of God, there is no better place to prove his spiritual leadership than in his own family. In 1 Timothy 3:4-5, Paul reinforced this importance of good family leadership: "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"

To begin with, the church leader must have "faithful children". The Greek word (*pistos*) for "faithful" is also rendered as "believing" elsewhere (cf. 1 Timothy 5:16; 6:2). Some argue that the word "faithful" does not require the children to be believers but only to be trustworthy, dutiful and responsible children, whereas others say that the word demands the children to be "believers". Suffice it to say that this writer personally thinks it is rather impossible to guarantee the biblical requirements of a leader's children without they being believers.

The scriptural passage in Titus says that the church leader's children must "not (be) accused of riot or unruly". "Riot" and "unruly" are very strong words. The Greek word (*asōtia*) translated as "riot" refers to an immoral, wasteful, drunken lifestyle (cf. Ephesians 5:18; 1 Peter 4:4). It pictures prodigality. The second Greek word (*anupotaktos*), which is translated as "unruly", refers to the insubordinate, disobedient and rebellious attitude of the children (cf. Titus 1:10). In 1 Timothy 3:4, the apostle Paul said that the children ought to be "in subjection with all gravity". The words "riot" and "unruly" fitted the children of Eli the priest (cf. 1 Samuel 2-3). Wild and disobedient children are a bad

reflection on the home, especially on the father's inability to guide others. Church leaders' children are not to be professing believers who lead immoral lives. On the contrary, their lifestyle must exemplify the life of "faithful children".

It must also be noted that the leader must be "one that ruleth well his own house" (1 Timothy 3:4). A Christian author remarks, "A most important principle, which has not always had the prominence it deserves (is that) ... any man unable to govern his children graciously and gravely by maintaining good discipline, is no man for government in the Church" (Donald Guthrie). A biblical leader or elder is best tested by how well he handles his children, and not by his wealth, success or popularity. The necessity and importance of this requirement are immediately supported by the question: "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" In other words, a man who is successful as a businessman, a top military officer or a bank manager, but a failure in the upbringing and nurture of his children (so that they become faithful and obedient children), is disqualified from being a leader of the church. So, a leader must not only be a faithful husband but also a good parent who knows how to bring up his children in a godly way.

Nobility in Attitude and Conduct [vv. 7-8]

Titus 1:7-8 gives two lists of general characteristics, one list of five "negatives" and the other of six "positives" – "not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate". All

of them depict the leader as a morally noble man.

The “Negatives” [v. 7]

“Not selfwilled” – This trait is the opposite of self-loving arrogance. A leader should not be always seeking his own way, satisfaction and glory. He must first of all be one who seeks out the mind of God and does only that which God wants him to do for the church. Secondly, he must also be willing to cooperate with others and consider others’ ideas and thoughts.

“Not soon angry” – A leader of the church cannot be quick-tempered. The apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:24-25 that “the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men ... patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves”. When things do not go the way the leader wants them to be, he should be able to retain his composure (internally and externally). Anger does not produce anything valuable in the spiritual leadership.

“Not given to wine” – This leadership requirement appears in 1 Timothy 3:3. This is not to say that the leaders never drank wine, which was a common drink (more like grape juice) in those days. This is rather a warning against intoxicating wine or any other intoxicants. He is not to be a drinker, one who goes into bars and inns, or places associated with drinking where there is a potential for drunkenness.

“No striker” – The term “striker” also appears in 1 Timothy 3:3. It basically speaks of someone who uses his hands, fist, a stick or a rock to hit someone else. It is reflective of one who takes vengeance on others violently. A leader must be willing to suffer even violence! He who goes around

punching people obviously has no part in spiritual leadership.

“Not given to filthy lucre” – A leader must not be a man who is desirous of sordid gain. The phrase “given to filthy lucre” describes a man whose heart is set on amassing wealth through any means. Such a man would not value honesty and integrity. [This qualification is certainly not against a leader taking his wages (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:14; 1 Timothy 5:17).]

The “Positives” [v. 8]

“A lover of hospitality” – The Greek word which is translated as “a lover of hospitality” can literally mean “a lover of strangers”. It is expected of all Christians to be hospitable (cf. Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 5:10; Hebrews 13:2). The message portrayed by this word is that a leader must be willing to make himself and his possessions available to people, whom he does not know, primarily other Christians. The biblical meaning of hospitality is not to have one’s friends coming over to one’s house for dinner, but to have even the strangers come under one’s roof and to entertain them. A leader must be a generous man.

“A lover of good men” – These words refer to a leader’s associations and acquaintances. They translate the Greek word (*philagathos*), which simply means loving what is good. A leader is to be a lover of good men. Indeed, much can be said about a man by looking at his friends and what surrounds him. A leader’s heart should dwell upon things and people who are noble and excellent.

“Sober” – This word is a translation of the Greek word that literally means having “soundness of mind” or being “sober-minded”. It requires a leader to be

discreet, balanced, sensible in thinking, reasonable and controlled through sound judgment. Alexander Strauch expresses the importance of this trait most succinctly: “Sober-mindedness greatly tempers pride, authoritarianism and indiscretion. Prudence is an essential quality of mind for a humble, servant-leader who must handle problems and guide others in the Lord’s ways.”

“Just” – A leader must be a just man who conducts himself according to the divine principles about life. This word is a description of a man who meets God’s standards for life. He must be one who is known for the fact that he lives according to divine standards.

“Holy” – The word translated as “holy” has the idea of being pure, unpoluted and free from stains of sin. A leader’s ways should be guarded by self-examination, confession of sins, prayer, and application of God’s Word. A leader is to be a reminder to the church that it is possible to live a holy life.

“Temperate” – In order to be a leader, a man must be characterised by self-discipline, self-restraint and self-control in every aspect of life. The book of Proverbs reminds us that “He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls” (Proverbs 25:28). A man in the leadership who is not firm

and disciplined will cast the congregation wide open to spiritual disasters!

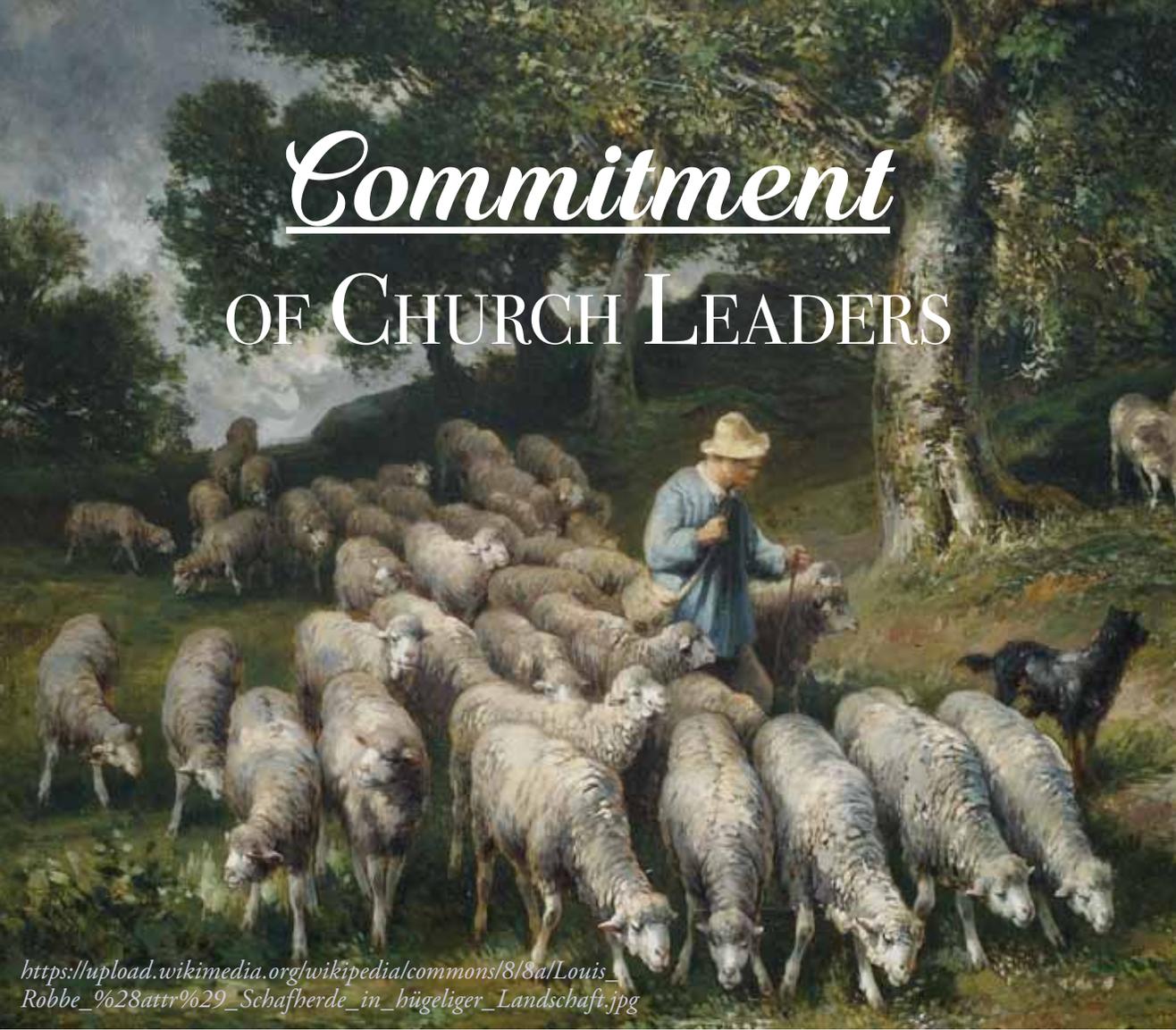
Conclusion

In a nutshell, the character of a leader must be the reflection of his inner man. It is not a feigned or forced outward polishing of life in order to cover up the indiscipline and corruption of the real person. The spiritual qualities discussed above must consistently characterise the leader’s life. Only morally and spiritually qualified men should come to the various offices of the church leadership.

To compromise on compliance to these biblical qualifications would have grave consequences for the church. Absence of any of these spiritual virtues in a leader’s life would mean that the wrong man had entered the leadership of the church. It is thus essential that those considered for church leadership be examined in the light of these inviolable scriptural requirements. While no man is perfect, every aspiring leader must have growing commitment to God’s truth, holiness and effective service. This is non-negotiable. In the proper administration and oversight of church matters, we need men who have exhibited abiding faith in God and His Word, submission to the Holy Spirit, godly and practical wisdom in their individual, family and church affairs.

... the character of a leader must be the reflection of his inner man. It is not a feigned or forced outward polishing of life in order to cover up the indiscipline and corruption of the real person ... Only morally and spiritually qualified men should come to the various offices of the church leadership.

Commitment OF CHURCH LEADERS



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8a/Louis_Robbe_%28attr%29_Schafherde_in_hügeliger_Landschaft.jpg

The apostle Peter's concern for good, committed leadership had led him to write about the responsibilities of the elders who are the leaders of a local church in 1 Peter 5:1-4. Referring to himself as also being an elder, Peter admonishes his readers in his capacity as one who is familiar with the demands of the job. His counsel is based on the fact that he knew by experience the immense and grave responsibilities, problems and challenges faced by the elders, which must needs entail nothing less than wholehearted commitment.

A Commitment to Maintain a Close Relationship with Christ [v. 1b]

Peter wrote about himself both as “a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed” (v. 1b). The term “witness” means more than being merely a spectator. It comes from the Greek word (*martus*) from which we get the English word “martyr”. It speaks of Peter's willingness to share his experiences of Christ at any cost for the benefit of others. Now, it is noteworthy to realise, from the Gospel accounts, that Peter had seen the sufferings of Christ in

the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. He had also been privileged to have shared the glory to come when he closely viewed and experienced the glorious experience of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (cf. Matthew 17:1-5).

Like Peter, every leader of the church must be one who deeply appreciates his intimate experiences with the Lord Jesus Christ. He must be one who is daily growing in his wonderful experiences with the Lord. His daily encounters with the Lord in the Scriptures and in prayer must lead him to greater consecration and ministry. Leaders of the church must cultivate a growing relationship with Christ and thereby be able to share with the people their spiritual knowledge and experience.

A Commitment to Feed the Flock [v. 2a]

Peter exhorted the leaders to “Feed the flock of God which is among you” (v. 2a). The word “flock” is often used in the Bible as a figure of God’s people or church. The elders’ duty is to “feed” them. The word “feed” in the Greek (*poimainō*) means more than just giving food. It denotes the work of a shepherd in caring for the flock. It includes leading the sheep to green pastures and still waters, indicating the care, guidance and protection which a shepherd extends to his flock. So the Lord’s expectation of His under-shepherds is that they will tend His flock like a genuine shepherd who is committed to nurture, protect and lead his sheep.

Church leaders must be willing to do the job of shepherding – feeding God’s people lovingly and patiently with God’s Word. They shepherd the flock by “labour(ing) in the word and doctrine” (1 Timothy 5:17),

that they may adequately and appropriately teach the flock of God, so as to nourish and guide them. No leader fulfils his duty of shepherding until he leads the people to the right knowledge of the Scriptures on the issues of doctrine and life.

A Commitment to Take the Oversight of the Flock [v. 2b]

Every leader must take “the oversight thereof”. A leader is “over” the members as a loving and caring leader. This is especially so in the case of a pastor. The job of a pastor (being a shepherd) is not just “lecturing” on Sundays. He should be regarded as one with God-given authority to direct and lead according to God’s Word, as attested to by Hebrews 13:17 – “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

A leader must not be lazy. He must do his job “not by constraint, but willingly” (v. 2c). The motivation of the shepherd should not be “filthy lucre” (v. 2d) – that is, for huge financial return or sordid gain. Peter is not arguing against supporting a full-time worker. Rather, he is warning leaders against covetousness. Making money must not be the main motive for a leader’s ministry. Instead, he must have a “ready mind” (v. 2e) to do the work of the ministry. The word “ready” has the idea of eagerness. A leader must have the eagerness to serve among God’s people, no matter what price he has to pay.

A Commitment to Lead by Example [v. 3]

In verse 3, Peter makes a contrast between dictatorship and leadership – “Neither as

being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." Leaders are not to force people to do things, but must lead the way by showing them the path to follow. They must practise what they preach so that the flock may have a good example to imitate, just like Paul (as their founding pastor) was to the Philippian church an inspirational example and a scriptural pattern to follow. "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9).

A Commitment to Please Christ Alone [v. 4]

In urging the leaders to minister with Christ's return in view, Peter is, in effect, alluding to the true loyalty of their consecrated hearts. "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (v. 4).

Leaders must remember that they are the under-shepherds of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Their ultimate responsibility is to Christ rather than to any man in the congregation. So leaders must not be crowd-pleasers, but Christ-pleasers. Their greatest desire must be to please the Lord who will soon return to reward each man according to his deeds. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). To the faithful leaders, He will give "a crown of glory" at His coming.

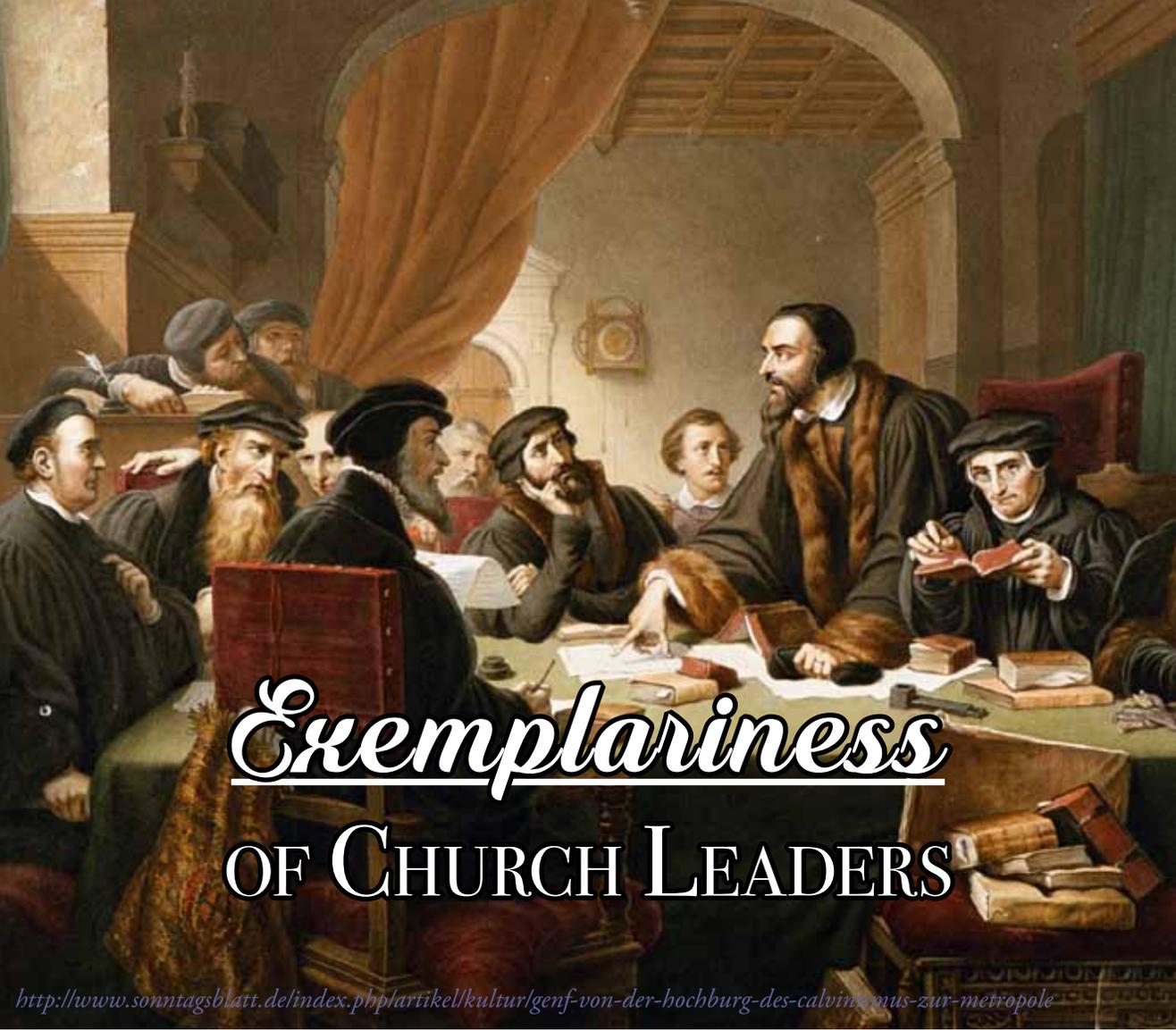
Conclusion

Scripture warns believers (which certainly applies to leaders in the church) to "Examine yourselves ... (and) prove your

own selves" (2 Corinthians 13:5), and exhorts leaders to "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, ... to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28, 31) against "grievous wolves" and "men speaking perverse things". A committed church leader should not take his appointment as an elder for granted. Self-examination and vigilance are much needed to avoid pride, laziness, tardiness, irresponsibility and all kinds of sins that would soon render a leader an unprofitable and a dangerous individual in the leadership of the church.

In fact, anyone who pretends to be an overseer of the Lord's flock without the corresponding commitment would often slumber during his watch and wait for things to somehow work out just fine. Such a noncommittal attitude is very dangerous. The leaders of God's flock must be vigilant, diligent and wholehearted in their oversight and duties. If they are neither vigilant nor thorough nor careful, the church and her ministries will soon be overtaken by great tragedies. May Isaiah 56:10 never be said of our church leaders – "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber"!

O dear church leaders, may you pray that you will be men of due diligence and faithfulness in preaching God's Word, caring for souls and managing the affairs of the church! It goes without saying that when church leaders commit to conducting themselves according to biblical counsels, they, together with the members of the church, become a formidable army of the Lord in this hostile world.



Exemplariness OF CHURCH LEADERS

<http://www.sonntagsblatt.de/index.php/artikel/kultur/genf-von-der-hochburg-des-calvinismus-zur-metropole>

All the leadership training available today cannot produce exemplary church leaders. All the years of leadership experience in social, commercial, political, government and other secular institutions cannot make spiritual leaders out of men. The church is a spiritual institution which cannot be run like a secular organisation. The church exists to glorify God in all matters and to fulfil all His will concerning her. Her aim is not material gain or earthly powers and glory, but salvation, sanctity and spiritual maturity of people whom the Lord Jesus

Christ adds to the church, that they may be ready for His second coming. In order to guide the church to achieve her spiritual goals, men of exemplary spiritual life are needed.

Need for Leaders' Spiritual Example

A most challenging and crucial task of a godly church leadership is to lead the church biblically, even through the worst of times. In our day and age, an unprecedented attack is now being waged against the authority of God's Word. To

every discerning mind, it is absolutely clear that a spiritual revolt against God's divine authority is underway under the banners of "pragmatism", "relativism", "political correctness", "one-world religion", "alternative lifestyle", etc. These are seen not only without the church, but also within. The disintegration of moral values and the demise of doctrinal purity that are seen within the churches today are really a warning to us. Undoubtedly, the leadership of our church today must be prepared to face these powerful wicked forces that could so easily infiltrate into our congregation.

For that, we need "spiritual leaders", not mere leaders. A leader's spirituality begins with his own devotion to sound doctrines of the Bible and godly living. There is no room for lacklustre attitude towards one's own personal purity. As Paul wrote to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16). Without a keen interest in personal and congregational purity, no one can be a God-honouring leader of the church. Churches of our day have no lack of leaders, but many are not necessarily "spiritual leaders", nor are they exemplary. Indeed, many of such so-called church leaders are in danger of God's condemnation, as sounded out by the prophet Jeremiah – "For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered" (Jeremiah 10:21)!

Pattern for Believers to Follow

In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul exhorted Timothy to be exemplary in six areas of his spiritual life, which are pertinent to proper church leadership – "Let no man

despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." The life of a leader of God's people must reflect godliness. He must be an "example". In Greek, it means "model" or "pattern". An artist uses a model so that he may be able to reproduce it in the style of his work. A tailor will normally lay a pattern on top of the material and cut the material to match the pattern. Likewise, a leader's life sets an example for the people of God to follow. Indeed, the pastor's life is his most powerful sermon!

Paul cultivated a life that was godly, thus he could tell others to follow his life pattern. He wrote to the Corinthian church: "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me" (1 Corinthians 4:16); "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1; cf. Philippians 3:17; 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6). Likewise, to the Thessalonian church, he unashamedly declared, "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us" (2 Thessalonians 3:7-9).

Exemplariness in Six Choice Areas of Godliness

We shall now briefly look at the six areas of a leader's spiritual life, which he must pay close attention to.

In Word

Firstly, the speech and discourse of a spiritual leader is to be exemplary. His words and attitude in speech must be worthy of

praise. This is significant because our Lord has said that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34b). He also in no uncertain terms warned: “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:37). A leader must guard his mouth from falsehood (cf. Ephesians 4:25). Truly, “A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit” (Proverbs 15:4). The credibility of a pastor will be greatly destroyed when people start comparing the contradicting things he, as a leader, has been telling people.

Moreover, a leader’s speech must be “alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6). His speech must not be ungracious. Certainly, righteous anger has its place, but no place should be given to the sin of anger. As is exhorted by Paul, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29). It would be very shocking to hear someone, who is called into the full-time ministry, relating dirty jokes and filthy stories. That would surely reveal a dirty heart!

In Conversation

The word “conversation” here means conduct and is used to denote one’s way of life. A leader’s conduct must be built upon biblical principles. He must be a model of biblical living. The books you read, the shows / films you watch, your appearance, the places you go to, the things you possess, the activities you participate in, and all the rest must be a pattern for others to follow.

A leader ought never to adopt a lifestyle that people should not practise. Many church leaders mimic the world’s pattern of

life. They live like the world. Many do very little to build up their own devotional and spiritual lives, and those of their families. Leaders’ families are suffering spiritually, and some are even disintegrating as they (like the world) try to build up their financial security by getting their spouses to work outside and neglecting the time and energy needed in cultivating the godliness of their families. Many churches seem to be altogether unaware of the resultant degeneration of the families. Oh, as the prophet Hosea lamented, “like people, like priest” (Hosea 4:9)!

In Charity

The word “charity” translates the Greek word (*agape*) meaning “love”. A leader must constantly strive to be loving. It does not mean that he has to put up with and tolerate everything without discernment. Love is not just emotion and words. It is action. Love is best expressed through service. This is manifestly demonstrated through the testimony of Paul’s loving service, as depicted in 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12. “But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: as ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.”

In Spirit

A leader, all the more a pastor, must exhibit the control, leading and filling of the Holy Spirit in his life. Every servant of God must seek “to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16). This is also reiterated by Paul in Galatians 5:25 – “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Paul further emphasised a similar thought in 2 Timothy 1:7-8 when he admonished Timothy, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God”.

In Faith

In Greek, this word can mean “faithfulness”. One must be loyal to the doctrines of God’s Word. There must be consistency in the leader’s teaching and preaching. Paul expressly pointed out regarding “the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God” that “moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). In this respect, it is noted that Paul had a number of co-workers who remained faithful and were exemplary “in faith”. Epaphras (cf. Colossians 1:7) and Tychicus (cf. Colossians 4:7) were two such sterling examples.

In Purity

The Greek word used here (*hagneia*) refers not only to sexual chastity, but also the intents of the heart. When one’s heart is pure, one’s behaviour will also be pure. “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Timothy 2:21). An exemplary leadership is one that is committed to godliness of themselves and the congregation, that God may take good pleasure to use that particular church as a sanctified vessel for His glory.

Conclusion

When an elder or a deacon is exemplary “in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity”, he will become effective and fruitful in his work. He will not grow weary when the work is very difficult and demanding; nor will he adopt a casual and sloppy attitude towards his work simply because it is a small or familiar one. On the contrary, he will “bend over” it, throwing his heart and soul into it, whether it be great or small. He knows half-hearted work will bring no real advancement. Such exemplary church leaders know that they shall reap real rewards if they throw themselves unreservedly to the work that God has entrusted them with, and will thus be “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, ... know(ing) that (their) labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

The life of a leader of God’s people must reflect godliness. He must be an “example”. In Greek, it means “model” or “pattern” ... Indeed, the pastor’s life is his most powerful sermon!

Effectiveness OF CHURCH LEADERS

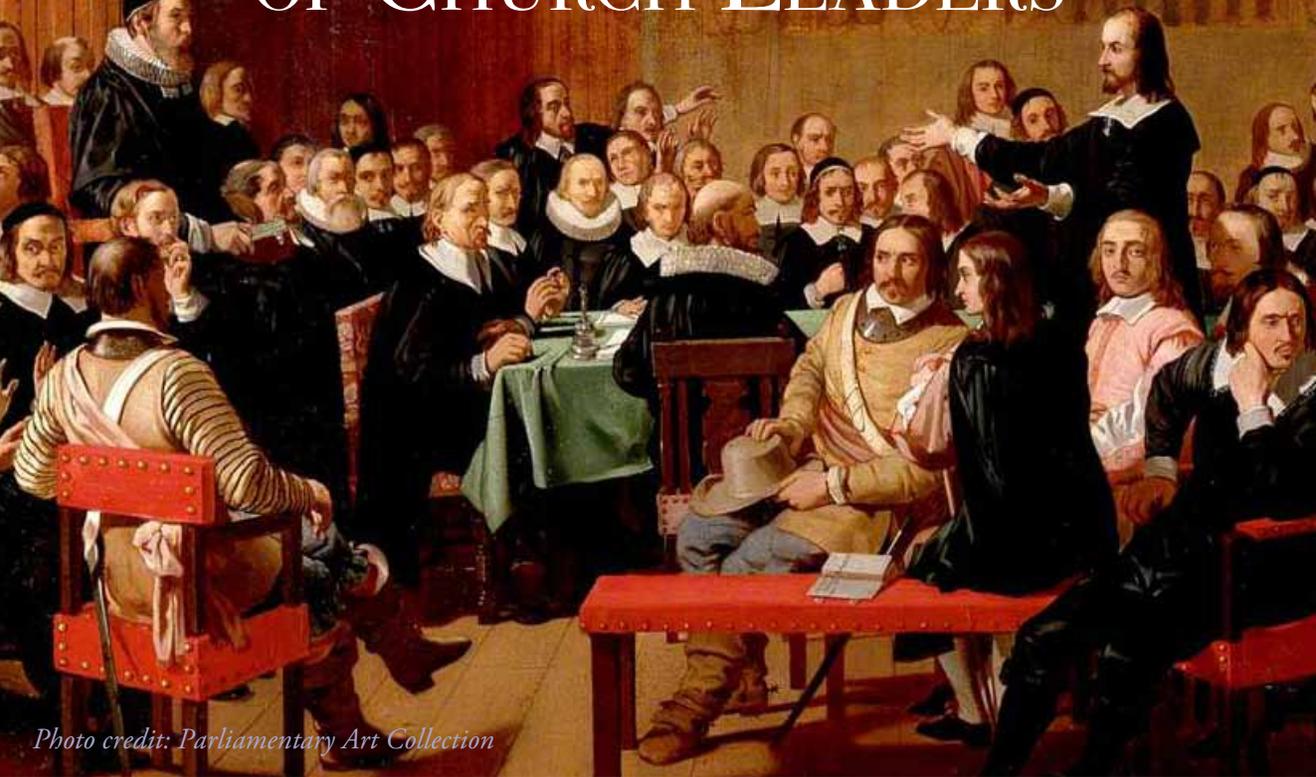


Photo credit: Parliamentary Art Collection

Leadership does not exist in a vacuum. Effective church leadership is not only efficient and fruitful in fulfilling its God-given responsibilities, but the fellow leaders who make up the leadership must also have a constant desire and aspiration in the Lord, as well as a good, biblically-based spiritual rapport with members of the congregation.

After being in the pastoral ministry for more than two decades, it is this writer's conviction that no leader has complete mastery over the work, challenges, temptations and trials that he will encounter in the ministry. Constant

vigilance is necessary from the collective leadership, the individual leader and every member of the church to maintain an effective leadership in the church.

The Leadership's Collective Responsibilities

The Church Session (consisting of pastor, elders and deacons), together with the preachers of the church must assume a collective responsibility to safeguard and guide the church in the truth and holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ. They must be cooperative and accountable to one another to provide mutual encouragement,

correction and support. They must remain united and harmonious as they serve the Lord together. The failure of a leader to submit, collaborate and join forces with fellow leaders will affect the efforts of the rest of the leadership.

From the Scriptures, we know that the apostles had been blessed with responsible men who maintained a reciprocal relationship with them in the ministry. The apostle Paul often expressed his boundless joy in men who served along with him in the ministry with great camaraderie. Consider a few cases in point:

- “Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you” (2 Corinthians 8:23).
- “Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier” (Philippians 2:25).
- “Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ” (Colossians 1:7).
- “Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ” (1 Thessalonians 3:2).
- “Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer” (Philemon 1:1).

The church leaders are not in a competition among themselves. There should be no rivalry among the leaders of the church. When those in the leadership are like-minded, the church will greatly benefit from their congenial spirit and efforts. This is well demonstrated in Paul’s testimony about Timothy: “For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state” (Philippians 2:20). Indeed, together they must give of themselves to protect and feed the church. In Acts 20:28, Paul commanded the elders of the

Ephesian church, “Take heed therefore ... to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (cf. 1 Peter 5:1-3).

The Leaders’ Individual Responsibilities

Every church leader must be diligent in ensuring his daily growth in the Lord. His maxim ought to be: “grow or die!” In the church leadership, when one stops growing spiritually, he has already started to die.

Every leader must also be cautious to discipline himself in order to remain holy before the Lord. He must examine himself in order to recognise and avoid anything in him that could damage his testimony and effectiveness as a church leader. The apostle Paul knew that he needed to be on his guard consistently when he said in 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 – “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible ... But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” There is certainly no room for spiritual complacency. Paul disciplined himself, that he might not do anything that would tarnish his reputation and nullify his service which would render him ineffective (or even disqualified) as a leader.

Here is a checklist for all in the leadership on appropriate conduct that befits effective church leaders:

- Am I godly in character, manifesting the life of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit?
- Do I commune with the Lord and pray fervently?

- Have I been leading my family in the Lord?
- Have I increased in faith, knowledge of God's Word and service?
- Have I shown resilience in the face of difficulties and even setbacks?
- Have I patiently endured my trials with an unflinching spirit?
- Have I cultivated good relationships with fellow leaders in the service of the Lord?
- Have I been responsible, prompt and devoted to the Lord's work that is assigned to me?
- Do I stir my heart to give my very best for the Lord?
- Have I been self-sacrificial in being generous and helpful concerning the needs of the church?
- Have I given myself to improve and build up the areas of my responsibilities and the lives of those who are under my care?
- Do I encourage others in the church to love and serve the Lord?

The Church's Cooperation with the Leaders

To have an effective church leadership, members of the church have an important role to play. Hebrews 13:17 reminds us that church leaders will have to give an account to the Lord about the souls of their flock – “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” In this regard, we do well not to oppose them or bring hardship and grief to their spirit.

Disregarding divine counsels (as is warned in Hebrews 13:17) is to be a hindrance to the work of God's appointed

servants in the church. Unnecessary criticism, rude remarks, disrespect, an uncooperative attitude, threatenings and all such conduct not only would bring sadness and struggles in the leaders' hearts, they are spiritually dangerous to oneself and to the church. Giving your leaders cause for groaning is of no advantage to you. If they struggle with the burdens of the ministry, please patiently and lovingly avail yourself to help them in a God-honouring manner. Let every God-honouring Christian be a great joy to his church leaders, be they the pastor, elder, deacon or preacher. Indeed, let every God-honouring congregation take heed of Paul's impassioned exhortation to the Corinthian church – “Wherefore shew ye to them (in the context, fellow labourers in the Gospel like Titus; and by extension, church leaders), and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting (or rejoicing) on your behalf” (2 Corinthians 8:24).

Conclusion

When the church leaders pay heed to their collective and individual responsibilities, they will not only be effective but also have joy in their service. When the congregation is edified and grows spiritually in response to the effective service of its church leaders, what joy it brings to their hearts! This is highlighted and experienced by the apostle Paul concerning the Thessalonian church – “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy” (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). To be truly able to say such glorious things about a church would be a good measure of the biblical effectiveness of the leaders of that church.

Bible Trivia - Exodus 33

Sarah Yong

A) Read the entire passage from the Bible, and then complete each of the 8 sentences below by choosing the most suitable phrase from the helping list, based on this passage. (Write the representative letter of your answer in the box at the end of each sentence.)

- (C) promised that His presence would go with him and He would give him rest.
 (D) removed their ornaments by the mount Horeb.
 (F) would proclaim the name of the LORD before him.
 (G) so that anyone who wished to seek the LORD might go out unto it.
 (L) which had been promised to Abraham's descendants.
 (M) the people rose up and worshipped in their tent doors.
 (R) send His angel before them to drive out the heathen inhabitants.
 (S) Moses would not see the face of the LORD.

- 1) Moses was told to bring the people unto the land flowing with milk and honey.....
 2) The LORD would not go with those stiff-necked people, but He promised to
 3) When the children of Israel heard the evil tidings, they mourned and they
 4) The Tabernacle of the congregation was pitched afar off from the camp.....
 5) When Moses entered the tabernacle, a cloudy pillar stood at the door, and.....
 6) Moses asked God to reveal His plan for the nation of Israel, and the LORD.....
 7) The LORD also agreed to make His glory and goodness pass before Moses, and.....
 8) The LORD would cover Moses with His hand while His glory passed by so that.....

B) Fill in the blanks of this "special message", with the letters corresponding to the answers of the numbered sentences above, to figure out what it is.

THE $\frac{1}{1}$ $\frac{0}{2}$ $\frac{3}{3}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{0}{3}$ IS $\frac{5}{5}$ $\frac{E}{2}$ $\frac{6}{6}$ $\frac{I}{7}$ $\frac{U}{1}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{A}{6}$ $\frac{I}{6}$ $\frac{O}{6}$ $\frac{U}{8}$.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE TRIVIA - EXODUS 32 (VOLUME 17, ISSUE 4, P. 27)

Answers (top to bottom): 5, 3, 7, 1, 4, 9, 2, 6, 8

The 1st Commandment: Thou shalt have no other gods before me

The 2nd Commandment: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image...

ERIC HENRY LIDDELL

FROM AN OLYMPIAN TO A MISSIONARY (1902 – 1945) - PART III

(Retold from “Living 4 God” by Kath Dredge, published by Day One Publications;
“For the Glory: Eric Liddell’s Journey from Olympic Champion to Modern Martyr”
by Duncan Hamilton, published by Penguin Press)

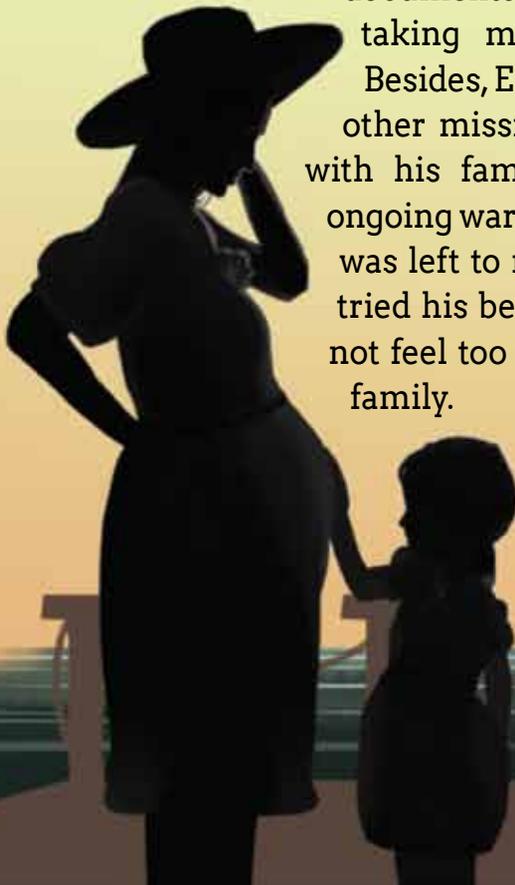
Retold by Jenny Lok Illustrated by Andronicus Koshy

Soon, Eric Liddell was due for his second furlough, whereby he planned to bring his family to Canada and later to Scotland for a break. By then, World War Two had broken out. To avoid unnecessary risks to his wife and 2 children, Eric left them in Canada while he went to England alone to answer a call of duty from the London Missionary Society (LMS). He tried to enlist in the Royal Air Force as a crew member but was rejected because, at the age of 37, he was considered too old for service. They offered him “a job behind a desk” but Eric felt that his time would be better spent serving God in China. So in 1940, the family set sail for China again from Canada. Although the voyage was fraught with danger, they managed to arrive safely in Tientsin by God’s grace. Eric returned to Siaochang soon thereafter.

The Siaochang that Eric left behind had changed drastically. The Japanese had built a wall around the entire village. Men were forced into hard labour, such as road construction. The situation in Siaochang became so bad that in mid-February 1941, the missionaries had to leave for Tientsin. Soon Florence realised that she was expecting her third child (due in September). When they later learnt that Siaochang was destroyed in the war, both Eric and Florence knew that it would be too dangerous for her to give

birth in China at a time when there was violence and bloodshed everywhere. They discussed at length and prayed over the matter. The best option would be for Florence to go back to Canada with the children, while Eric remained in Tientsin to continue his service among the Chinese whom he had come to regard as "my people". Would the day of reunion ever come? They hoped it would be soon, in God's time. On the day of parting, Florence, almost 6 months pregnant, was in tears but Eric tried his best to remain cheerful and spoke to his eldest daughter Patricia lovingly, "I want you to look after your mother ... (and) new baby." After the goodbyes, without a single glance behind him, Eric walked away quickly lest his sadness overcame him. Florence could only weep softly.

Seven months later, Eric received news that Florence had given birth to their third daughter, whom they named Maureen. Eric was simply delighted. However, it was getting harder and harder to serve in Tientsin as the Japanese made it very difficult for Eric to travel to the distant farms to minister to the Chinese people. He was frequently delayed by much questioning and checking of documents. The Japanese were also everywhere, taking many valuables from the missionaries. Besides, Eric was not allowed to teach or preach. Like other missionaries, he could neither communicate with his family nor leave Tientsin because of the ongoing war within and without China. Thus Florence was left to manage the 3 girls in Canada, while Eric tried his best to keep himself busy so that he would not feel too much of the painful separation from his family.



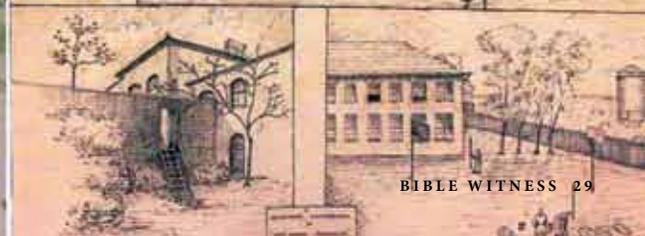
In the meantime, the Japanese did not allow the missionaries to roam outside the city area where they were kept in. They were also forbidden to assemble in groups of more than 10. To get round the problem, the missionaries tried to have their wives organise tea sessions, during which a short service would be held. Eric was often the one who wrote these sermons. He made use of his time during this war period to study God's Word. His aim was to increase his knowledge of theology and memorise Scripture. In addition, he also compiled "an anthology of prayer" and a book entitled "Discipleship", which was later renamed "The Disciplines of the Christian Life". Eric had truly shown by his life that a Christian who grows in devotion to God will love and serve Him faithfully.

Unexpectedly, in mid-March 1943, Eric learnt that the missionaries would be sent to the "Civil Assembly Centre" at Weihsien in Shandong province. They were called "civil internees" and not officially prisoners of war. The campsite was actually a war-torn American Presbyterian mission station. Upon arrival, what the internees saw were broken furniture, damaged windows and dirty walls. The floor was strewn with debris and the stench of rotting garbage was unbearable. Once a spotless centre of mission work, this place was now left in ruins. It was going to be a very trying time for 1800 internees who had to stay in a filthy and cramped environment. There was also no way anyone could escape because the entire camp was surrounded by a grey 8-foot high wall and electrified bands of barbed wire. Japanese soldiers with rifles and bayonets stood guard round the clock. Despite the gloomy situation, Eric was thankful that his things were intact upon arrival at Weihsien, compared to a number of internees who had their possessions stolen by the Japanese. Florence was duly informed by the LMS of Eric's imprisonment. On his part, Eric was careful not to let Florence know the suffering he was going through so as not to cause her any undue worry or fear. In the meantime, they could only keep in touch through letters. (All internees were allowed to send one Red Cross message, written in a maximum of 25 words,

*Original paintings and sketches by Eric Lidell's fellow mates in Weihsien camp.
taken from - <http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/index.htm>*

every month). In all his letters to Florence, Eric was always hopeful and cheerful.

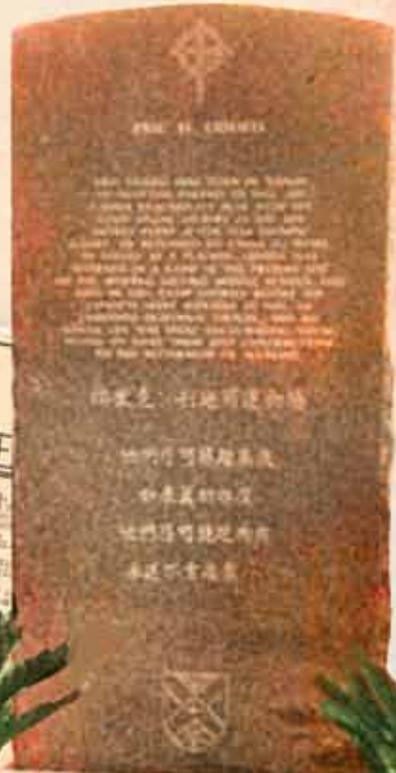
Life in the camp at Weihsien was really difficult. The internees were not issued any new clothes by the Japanese and many had to resort to making clothes from any available materials, such as curtains, pillowcases and blankets, to replace their worn-out ones. Oftentimes, they were also hungry as the Japanese provided very little food, mainly grains (commonly given as animal food), semi-rotten meat from dead horses and donkeys, thin soup from some stringy vegetables, sour-tasting bread, etc. With so many people from different walks of life (some were cooks, musicians, teachers, doctors, businessmen, etc.) and nationalities (mostly Americans and British) living together under one roof, clashes over space and food were common. Quite often, Eric had to help to settle quarrels



and fights among the internees as he was regarded as an honest and fair judge. Nonetheless, the internees had no choice but to call this their temporary "home".

Eric was duly appointed the official Mathematics and Science teacher, but he was actually involved in almost everything in the camp, from arranging worship service, conducting Sunday Bible class to organising games for all the internees. No matter how busy he was, he would try his very best to reach out to those without Christ. When it came to daily chores in the camp, Eric was never idle; he was frequently sweeping the floor, chopping wood, clearing the garbage, carrying sacks of food supplies and helping out in the kitchen. If there was anything that needed repairing, Eric was the man to see to it. Always kind and helpful, Eric made every effort to spend time with internees who were lonely or troubled. He would listen patiently and encourage them with comforting words. However, not once did Eric share with any of them his own pain of being separated from his beloved wife, Florence, and their 3 daughters. Often, he would hold their photograph in his hands and gaze intently at their faces. He had yet to see his baby daughter

*Right: The Eric Lidell monument in modern day Weihshen
Bottom: Layout of 1943 Weihshen Concentration Camp*



Maureen, since the day she was born. Oh, how he longed to cradle her in his arms! By God's grace, Eric continued to devote much of his spare time to counselling youths, conducting Bible studies and organising meaningful sports activities. To the youths, he was "Uncle Eric"; to the adults, he was both a wonderful brother and friend. There were also orphans who had no one to turn to but Eric, who cared for them with much love and tenderness. In some ways, he also felt like an orphan without his family.

As the months flew by, the poor living conditions and lack of food started to take their toll on Eric. Gone were the pink cheeks and sparkly eyes as well as the "swing in his walk" and the "spring to his steps"; Eric was no longer the healthy and energetic athlete he used to be. Now, with his sunken eyes and cheeks, and bony limbs, he looked much older than his years. Gradually, his health deteriorated to the point that he could neither walk nor work. Unknown to him, he had developed a brain tumour which resulted in frequent headaches and loss of balance in his movements. His body became so weak that he had to be confined to the bed at the camp hospital. At the age of 43, after months of struggle with his sickness, Eric entered into the everlasting presence of the Almighty God – freed at last from all pains and sufferings. His last words were: "It's complete surrender." How true this was for Eric who had completely given himself to the Lord, whether in life or in the face of death. Many mourned his passing and testified to his wonderful testimony as a Christian missionary in China.

Dear children, Eric Liddell might have run an excellent race at the Olympic Games, but far greater was the "race" he had run in his Christian life. He was fully devoted to God in his life and service – giving up fame and glory as an Olympic gold medallist, and enduring patiently the absence of family and loss of freedom. Like Eric Liddell, let us "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Timothy 6:12).

GETHSEMANE B-P CHURCH BUILDING PROJECT



*“Every man according
as he purposeth in his heart,
so let him give;
not grudgingly,
or of necessity:
for God loveth
a cheerful giver.”*
2 Corinthians 9:7

*your prayers and
generous support
are most needful
and greatly
appreciated*

Cheque may be made payable
to **“Gethsemane B-P Church”**.
(Please indicate **“Build-
ing Fund”** on the reverse of
the cheque and send your
love-gift to **Gethsemane B-P
Church, 510 Geylang Road,
#02-06, Singapore 389466.**)

