

The Importance of Modeling Ministry

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The topic assigned to me for this Latin America Missionaries' Conference is "The Importance of Modeling Ministry." I'm going to make a couple of assumptions right at the outset. One assumption is that we all agree, as the title of this paper indicates, that modeling ministry *is* important and needs to be taken into account when setting up and maintaining a program of theological education to prepare nationals for service as pastors. A second assumption I am making is that the modeling you want me to be talking about is the modeling that our missionaries do, especially as they go about their work of training nationals for the ministry.

I'm going to approach this topic in the following way: First, I'm going to invite you to join me in an inductive study of the Scriptures to investigate how Jesus and the Apostle Paul trained people for the ministry. Having done that, we will gather together what we have learned and use it to guide us in the approach trainers of future pastors will want to take today. In the discussion that follows, I would hope that we might be able to explore in more detail how to apply what we have learned from observing Jesus and Paul; for those of you who are actually involved in training men for the ministry in our Latin American fields are in a much better position to provide "how to's" than an "outsider" from Mequon.

I. What Approach Did Jesus Take When Training His Disciples?

When we talk about Jesus as a trainer for the ministry, we fully recognize that he is much more than that. Far more important than his role as ministry trainer is his primary reason for coming into the world which was, as he himself said, "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). Above all, Christians look to Jesus as Savior.

On the other hand, it is not improper for Christians to look to Jesus also as a pattern for ministry training. The reaction of the crowds, "He has done all things well," applies also to the way he trained his disciples for the ministry. We can learn from Jesus, though we will never be able to perfectly imitate him.

Right from the beginning Jesus made it clear that he was going to train his disciples in two ways: by what he said (his teaching) and by what he did (his example). "Follow me," Jesus said to his disciples. Mark's Gospel tells us that Jesus "appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach." Note the order. First they would be *with* Jesus. Only after being with him for some time would they go out *from* Jesus to bring the Good News of salvation to the world. They would be with him day and night. He was the Rabbi; they were his followers. They would hear the Word of God from his lips as he taught them the teachings they one day would teach others. And they would see him putting into practice everything he taught as they observed how he carried out his ministry in their midst and among the people.

By way of illustration, let's look briefly at some of the ways by which Jesus served as a ministry model for his disciples.

Jesus Taught and Modeled Love for Souls

Jesus taught his disciples, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (Jn 13:35). What he taught he modeled again and again in his life as in his ministry he demonstrated a shepherd-heart of love for people. Several times the Gospel writers use a form of the verb *σπλαγχνίζω* to describe the love Jesus displayed both to the multitudes and to individuals. Prior to the feeding of both the 5,000 and the 4,000 we are told that Jesus had "compassion" on the multitudes (Mt 14:14; 15:32). His heart

went out to them. The same verb is used when Jesus encountered the man with leprosy (Mk 1:41), the widow at Nain (Lk 7:13), and the blind men at Jericho (Mt 20:34).

His love for souls showed itself in the way he always had time for people—time to take the little children up in his arms, time to spend a day with Zacchaeus, time to answer his disciples' every question, time for the woman at Jacob's Well.

Don't just love people who love you, Jesus taught, but "love your enemies" as well, and "pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5:44). With his "Father, forgive them" (Lk 23:34) from the cross Jesus modeled beautifully that kind of love also.

And, in an action that his disciples could never duplicate, but by the Spirit's power could faintly imitate, his love for souls was so deep that as the Good Shepherd he laid down his life for the sheep.

Jesus Taught and Modeled Concern for the Truth

"If you hold to my teaching" [I prefer the KJV's more literal 'If you continue in my Word'], Jesus taught his disciples, "then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (Jn 8:31-32). He warned his disciples to watch out for the "yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Mt 16:6). He instructed them, "Teach [all nations] to obey [literally, 'to guard, protect'] everything I have commanded you" (Mt 28:20). They should not be afraid of those who would try to keep them from teaching the true Word of God with its central message of justification by God's grace through the vicarious atonement. "What I tell you in the dark," he said, "speak in the daylight....Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt 10:27-28). Nor should they hesitate to speak the truth in love to an erring brother: "If your brother sins..., go and show him his fault" [a form of ἐλέγχω, "to expose, convict"]. By so doing they could win back their brother.

As the disciples observed Jesus in the course of his ministry, they saw in action this same fearless proclamation of the truth. He did not hesitate to call the Pharisees, opponents of the truth, a "brood of vipers" and a "wicked and adulterous generation" (Mt 12:34, 39). He even reprimanded sharply one of his own disciples ("Get behind me, Satan," Mt 16) for trying to divert him from the path his Father had laid out for him. On the other hand, to those who would listen he preached the truth so tirelessly and zealously (not even taking time to eat!) that his own family exclaimed, "He is out of his mind" (Mk 3:21).

"Preach the Word, all of it, come what may," is what Jesus taught his disciples to do. Preach the Word, all of it, come what may, is what Jesus himself did.

Jesus Taught and Modeled the Importance of a Devotional Life

Through his parable of the Ten Virgins, Jesus taught his disciples the importance of keeping their lamps burning brightly. Only through the "oil" of the Word would the Holy Spirit keep the lamps of their faith burning. Through another parable, that of the Persistent Widow, Jesus addressed the need for regular and persistent prayer.

What Jesus taught with regard to the importance of the Word and prayer in one's life that, too, he modeled in his ministry. How often would have the scene reported in Mark's Gospel been repeated: "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went to a solitary place where he prayed" (Mk 1:35). What a ministry model Jesus was!

Jesus Taught and Modeled a Spirit of Dedication

"If anyone would come after me," Jesus taught his disciples, "he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" What a call to dedication that was! It was a dedication that Jesus himself

displayed, on a far deeper level, as he unashamedly “made the good confession” (1 Tm 6:15) before Pontius Pilate, carried a literal cross on the Via Dolorosa, and then gave up his life for the sake of the world. Again, Jesus didn’t just say; he also did.

Jesus Taught and Modeled a Non-Judgmental Attitude

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged” (Mt 7:1), Jesus taught his disciples. It’s clear that he is warning against a judgmental attitude here, not all judging. You can’t “watch out for false prophets” (Mt 7:15) if you can’t make a judgment between truth and falsehood. A judgmental attitude, on the other hand, jumps to conclusions on the basis of flimsy or no evidence. It often is a matter of guilt by association.

In his ministry Jesus did not let pre-conceived, commonly-held notions cloud his thinking. Others may have thought that all “publicans and sinners” were hopeless cases. Jesus called a publican to be one of the Twelve. He spent a day in the home of Zacchaeus. He ate in the company of “publicans and sinners.” He permitted a “sinner” to anoint his feet with oil. He knew that the Son of Man had come to seek and to save the lost, which included every element of society. He thus demonstrated to his disciples that the only judgment they should make about people, no matter who they are, is that they are numbered among those he had come to rescue from death and hell.

Jesus Taught and Modeled Patience

“If your brother sins,” Jesus taught, “go and rebuke him.” What if he doesn’t listen? Don’t give up. Go again, taking along a few people with you. What if he still won’t listen? Then get an even larger group involved. But keep trying. Yes, eventually you may have to call the person a “pagan”; but in Matthew 18:15-18 Jesus is teaching his disciples the lengths to which they should go in rebuking an erring brother and calling him to repentance. Or, think of how Jesus used the Parable of the Fig Tree to teach patience to his disciples (Lk 13:6-9). For three years the owner looked for fruit on the tree, but found none. What did he do? He didn’t cut it down. He was patient. We’ll give it another chance, he agreed. One more year.

In his ministry Jesus modeled beautifully the patience he taught. James and John, together with their mother, came to Jesus with their ill-considered request to sit at Jesus’ right and left hand in his “glory.” Instead of sternly rebuking them for such a presumptuous request, Jesus, knowing that it was made in weakness, patiently responded, “You don’t know what you are asking” (Mk 10:38), and then he used the request as an opportunity to talk about true greatness in the kingdom of God. Or, think of the disciples’ question in Acts 1, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Ac 1:6). Jesus was about to ascend to heaven and leave them behind to carry out the ministry of the gospel, and they still didn’t get it. Yet, Jesus is patient with them. They would understand better in a few days when the Holy Spirit came upon them. Until that time, his only counsel is, “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority” (Ac 1:7). Thus, he practiced the patience he taught.

Jesus Taught and Modeled Humility

“The greatest among you will be your servant,” Jesus taught. “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Mt 23:11-12). How beautifully he modeled the very humility he taught, as he knelt down to wash his disciples’ feet (Jn 13:1-17) while they argued “which of them was considered to be greatest” (Lk 22:24). He went further than that: “He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross” (Php 2:8).

Jesus Taught and Modeled an Evangelical Spirit

By evangelical I mean gospel-centered rather than law-centered. It would be just the opposite of the legalistic spirit Peter displayed when he asked, “How many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” You know Jesus’ answer: “Not seven times, but seventy-seven times” (Mt 18:11). One imbued with an evangelical spirit doesn’t keep count. He realizes that the law is necessary, but he always remembers that the law is God’s “foreign” work. It must be used to accuse and condemn. But God’s primary message is the gospel; for “God did not send his Son into the world to *condemn* the world, but to *save* the world through him” (Jn 3:17).

What Jesus taught he displayed in his ministry. He didn’t hesitate to expose and condemn error and evil, e.g., the hypocrisy of the Pharisees; but above all he made it clear that “the law was given through Moses,” but “grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (Jn 1:17). In fact, he not only *prayed* “Father, forgive them” (Lk 23:34), by his sacrificial death he *purchased* and *won* us from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

Jesus Taught and Modeled an Evangelistic Spirit

Right from the start Jesus made it clear to his disciples what their ministry would be: “Come follow me,” he said, “and I will make you fishers of men” (Mk 1:17). He would train them to let down before people the net of the gospel, the Good News of Jesus, the world’s only Savior. Then he would commission them to go into all the world with that net.

But not only did Jesus *teach* evangelism to his disciples; he *modeled* it beautifully. In fact, immediately upon calling his first disciples he took them with him on an evangelistic tour of the cities and towns of Galilee, “preaching the good news [κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον] of the kingdom” (Mk 4:23).

It would not have been difficult for the disciples to “catch” the evangelistic spirit of Jesus. “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them [ἐσπλαγχνίσθη περὶ αὐτῶν ‘his heart went out to them’], because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask [δεήθητε, ‘beg, implore’] the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field’” (Mt 9:36-38). Which of them would not have been moved to respond, “Here am I. Send me”? Or which of the disciple’s hearts would not have been touched by Jesus’ lament over the stubborn obstinacy of Jerusalem: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing” (Mt 23:37). Evangelism can be *taught*. An evangelistic spirit is *caught*. Jesus was the source of both for his disciples.

Jesus Taught and Modeled a Multi-Cultural Approach to Ministry

The night of his birth was “good news and great joy for *all* the people” (Lk 2:11), not just for people of a certain culture or a certain race. “God so loved the *world*,” Jesus told Nicodemus, “that he gave his one and only Son” (Jn 3:16). “Many,” said Jesus, “will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 8:11). Salvation would not be the exclusive possession of the Jews. That is why Jesus’ commission to his disciples was to “make disciples of all nations [πάντα τὰ ἔθνη]” (Mt 28:19).

Though his earthly ministry was by his Father’s design primarily to “the lost sheep of Israel” (Mt 15:24), Jesus did model for his disciples the truth that the gospel was for people of every nation, tribe, language, and people. He “had to go through Samaria” (Jn 4:4) so he could bring the gospel to a *Samaritan* woman. He healed the servant of a *Roman* centurion (Mt 8:5-13). He drove the demons out of the daughter of a *Canaanite* woman (Mt 15:21-28). He not only taught that he had come as Savior of all people but by his personal involvement demonstrated that truth.

Jesus Taught and Modeled the Principle of Equipping the Saints for Ministry

Right from the outset Jesus made it clear that he was teaching his disciples not just so they could know and believe the truth but so that they could convey the truth to others. Jesus not only told the disciples what his intention for them was; he also prepared them for their work. Though he was *the* Prophet, he didn't hesitate to gradually involve his disciples in ministry—after he had properly prepared them. “Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two” (Mk 6:7). He sent out the Twelve (Mt 10) and then, not many months later, sent out the Seventy (Lk 10). At the same time, he himself continued to do the work of the ministry: “After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee” (Mt 11:1). Thus, while equipping his disciples for the ministry, he continued to serve as a role model of what the ministry is all about.

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We could give more examples of how Jesus was both teacher and model of the ministry for his disciples, but time constraints limit us to the above examples. Suffice it to say that Jesus was constantly modeling ministry—in what he said and in what he did, in the “classroom” and in the “trenches.”

II. What Approach Did Paul Take When Training His Co-Workers?

The number of Paul's colleagues and co-workers is impressive. The book of Acts and the Pauline epistles mention about 100 persons who were associated in some way at some time or another in Paul's ministry!¹ Paul was associated with co-workers such as Barnabas, Timothy, Silas, Luke, Titus, and Aquila and Priscilla for close to twenty years. From the information the Holy Spirit has seen fit to preserve for us Timothy and Titus in particular apparently received much of their ministry training from Paul.

Paul did not hesitate to hold himself up to his co-workers as an example to follow:

- “I urge you to imitate me [lit., ‘become imitators, μιμηταί, of me’]” (1 Cor 4:16).
- “Follow my example [lit., ‘become imitators, μιμηταί, of me’], as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1).
- “I plead with you, brothers, become like me” (Ga 4:12).
- “Join with others in following my example [lit., ‘become fellow imitators, συμμιμηταί, of me’], brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern [τύπος] we gave you” (Php 3:17).
- “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice [τάχτα πράσσετε] (Php 4:9).
- “You yourselves know how you ought to follow my example [lit., ‘to imitate, μιμῆσθαι, us’]” (2 Th 3:7).
- “We did this...in order to make ourselves a model [τύπος] for you to follow [lit., ‘for you to imitate,’ εἰς τὸ μιμῆσθαι ἡμῶς]” (2 Th 3:9).

What should men like Timothy and Titus imitate? With little difficulty we can demonstrate how all of the traits mentioned above about Jesus in his “seminary” teaching were traits that were clearly visible in Paul's ministry also:

- Love for souls
- Concern for the truth

¹ Roy B. Zuck, *Teaching As Paul Taught* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), p. 133. Zuck lists the names on pages 138-140.

- Importance of a devotional life
- Spirit of dedication
- Non-judgmental attitude
- Patience
- Humility
- Evangelical spirit
- Evangelistic spirit
- Multi-cultural approach to ministry
- Equipping the saints for ministry mindset

By the power of the Holy Spirit, Paul both *taught* all of the above and *modeled* these traits in the way he carried out his ministry.

Paul Taught and Modeled a Love for Souls

“Do not rebuke an older man harshly,” he taught Timothy, “but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters” (1 Tm 5:1). This is care of souls at its best, lovingly treating each person as a unique individual. Paul practiced what he preached. He reminds the Thessalonians, “We were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us....We dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children” (1 Th 2:7-8, 11).

Paul Taught and Modeled Concern for the Truth

“You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine,” he told Titus (Ti 1:1). He counseled Timothy, “Guard what has been entrusted to your care [τὴν παραθήκην, ‘the deposit,’ the whole body of truth]. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wondered from the faith” (1 Tm 6:20-21). “Watch your life and doctrine closely,” he urged (1 Tm 4:16). In his ministry Paul had done precisely what he urges Titus and Timothy to do. To the elders at Ephesus he says, “I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God” (Ac 20:26-27).

Paul Taught and Modeled the Importance of a Devotional Life

“Pray without ceasing,” he taught (1 Th 5:17). Paul himself was clearly a man of prayer, a man in regular communication with his heavenly Father, as can be seen in the opening verses of many of his epistles: “I always thank God for you” (1 Cor 1:4); “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you I always pray with joy” (Php 1:3-4); “We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray [πάντοτε προσευχόμενοι, present tense] for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints....Since the day we heard about you [from Epaphras], we have not stopped praying for you” (Co 1:3-4, 9); “We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Th 1:2-3); “Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers” (2 Tm 2:3). There can be no doubt that Paul modeled in his own life the devotional life he urged others to follow.

Paul Taught and Modeled a Spirit of Dedication

“Fan into flame the gift of God that is in you,” Paul exhorted Timothy. “Join with me in suffering for the gospel” (2 Tm 1:6, 8). “Be strong in the grace that is the Christ Jesus...Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Tm 2:1, 3). Again, in his ministry Paul did not urge upon others what he himself was not willing to do: “For which [i.e., the gospel] I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal...I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory” (2 Tm 2:9-10).

Paul Taught and Modeled a Non-Judgmental Attitude

“I charge you, in the sight of god and Christ Jesus and the elect angels,” he solemnly writes to Timothy, “to keep these instruction without partiality [προκρίματος, ‘pre-judging, prejudice’], and to do nothing out of favoritism [κατὰ πρόσκλισιν, ‘leaning toward (one way or the other)’]” (1 Tm 5:21). In his ministry Paul modeled such a non-judgmental attitude. He was grateful for the preaching of the gospel, however it might have occurred, even by those who may have been jealous of him. “The important thing,” he wrote, “is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this, I rejoice” (Php 1:18).

Paul Taught and Modeled Patience

“Correct, rebuke, encourage,” Paul taught Timothy, “with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Tm 4:2). “Be patient, bearing with one another in love,” he urged (Eph 4:2). Paul modeled what he taught: “To the weak,” he wrote, “I became weak, to win the weak” (1Cor 9:22), as he patiently worked with immature Christians to bring them to a full understanding of sound doctrine.

Paul Taught and Modeled Humility

“Remind the people,” Paul taught Titus, “...to show true humility toward all men” (Ti 3:1-2). “In humility,” he urged, “consider others better than yourselves” (Php 2:3). How did Paul evaluate himself? As “the least of the apostles” (1 Cor 15:9), as “the chief of sinners” (1 Tm 1:15).

Paul Taught and Modeled an Evangelical Spirit

In the first of his five “trustworthy sayings” in the Pastoral Epistles, Paul puts the spotlight on Jesus as Savior: “This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tm 1:15). That’s the Good news, the gospel. Yes, Timothy also needed to preach the law. Paul tells him to “convict” and to “rebuke.” But he is not to forget to use the gospel to “encourage,” to give good cheer to the corrected and repentant sinner. He is to remember that only the gospel brings joy and comfort to the lost, and only the gospel produces a new life of sanctification that is lived to the glory of God (cf. 2 Tm 4:2).

In admirable fashion Paul modeled this evangelical spirit he encouraged Timothy to display, always tying his calls to sanctification to the motivating, empowering gospel. Take just one example, of many: “I urge you, brothers,” he wrote to the Christians in Rome [note: “urge,” παρακαλέω, not “command”], “in view of God’s mercy [note the reference to the gospel], to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God” (Ro 12:1).

Paul Taught and Modeled an Evangelistic Spirit

“Preach [κήρυξον, ‘be a herald of’] the Word; be prepared in season and out of season [εὐκάρως, ἀκάρως, ‘when the time is right and when it isn’t right’]....Do the work of an evangelist [εὐαγγελιστός, of

one who brings the gospel to those who haven't heard it yet]" (2 Tm 4:2, 5). How clearly Paul displayed zeal to be a herald of the Word, to do the work of an evangelist in his ministry. "I am compelled to preach" [lit., 'Necessity is laid upon me (to evangelize people)'], he writes (1 Cor 9:16). Again, he practiced what he taught.

Paul Taught and Modeled a Multi-Cultural Approach to Ministry

"In Christ," Paul told the Galatians, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Ga 3:28). It doesn't take much searching to see how Paul modeled that statement in his ministry. He brought the gospel to the Jews; he brought the gospel to the Greeks. Some of his co-workers were Jews; some of his co-workers were Greeks. He evangelized Philemon; he evangelized Philemon's slave Onesimus. He valued many men as his co-workers; he valued women just as highly. Both Andronicus (male) and Junias (female) he lauds as "outstanding among the apostles" (Ro 16:7). He calls both Priscilla (female) and Aquila (male) "my fellow workers in Christ Jesus." "Not only I," he writes, "but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them" (Ro 16:3).

Paul Taught and Modeled an Equipping the Saints for Ministry Mindset

Paul told Timothy, "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Tm 2:2). Both the teaching and the modeling are in this one verse. What Paul was urging Timothy to do—to think in terms not just of teaching people but also of training people so that they would be capable of teaching others—is precisely what Paul had been doing with Timothy. He had taught him the truth, he had passed on the "good deposit" (2 Tm 1:14). But in the process he had also been training him so that Timothy in turn would be qualified and capable of passing on that same deposit to others.

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From this brief survey it is clear that Paul, like Jesus, was teacher and role model wrapped into one person. His co-workers learned from him as he taught them. His co-workers learned from him as he modeled in his ministry the teaching they had heard from his lips. In this way, by Paul's teaching and by Paul's ministry as a model for them to imitate, they learned what it was to be a minister of the gospel.

III. The Approach Trainers of Future Pastors Will Want to Take Today

Now, let's bring things up to this time and this place. What does our brief survey of the ministry-training carried out by Jesus and Paul say to us at this 2002 Latin America Missionaries' Conference? For one thing, I would pray that it will have helped us to get a picture of the kind of national pastors we want to see, under God, serving in the public ministry. While the qualities we have looked at above are not a totally comprehensive list (we might have used the qualities listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, for example), I think we would agree that *each of the traits we have discussed are highly desirable, necessary, in fact, to be present in the life and work of a minister of the gospel.*

- **Love for Souls** – Pastoral theology books speak of the pastor as being a *Seelsorger*, a man filled with a shepherd-heart of love for the members of his flock. A *Seelsorger* doesn't treat his members as though they were produced on an assembly line. To a *Seelsorger* every single member of the flock is a unique person, important in his or her own right, and therefore worthy of loving, individualized care on the part of the shepherd.

- **Concern for the Truth** – Being convinced that only the truth sets people free from sin and Satan’s tyranny, we want our pastors to *know* the truth and to evidence a concern to *uphold* the truth, first the truth of justification by God’s grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus, and then, in concentric circles around that core, all of the other truths our God has seen fit to reveal in his Sacred Scriptures.
- **Love for the Word** – If we want our pastors to go to people *with* the Word, we know that they also need to be men *of* the Word. We want them to be men to whom the Scriptures are not simply a resource for sermons and Bible classes, but first of all a storehouse of precious gems for their own souls. We want them to be men of God to whom devotional study of the Scriptures is as much a part of their life as eating and drinking.
- **Dedicated** – Our fervent prayer is that our pastors do not resemble the hired hand of John 10. Our goal, under God, is that they resemble the Good Shepherd himself in that they, too, are zealous to do everything they can, even to go so far as to lay down their own lives for the benefit of the sheep—both those already in the flock and the “other sheep” who are not yet a part of the one flock of the Good Shepherd.
- **Non-Judgmental** – We pray that the men we train and send out as pastors will not be quick to see the speck of dust in someone else’s eye while failing to notice the log in their own. We want them to be able to discern right from wrong, truth from error, but not to be quick to impugn motives.
- **Patient** – The quality of being long-suffering with people and with situations is most desirable in a pastor. A patient pastor will not become frustrated with the slow progress in sanctification on the part of his members, nor will he succumb to the temptation to give up when growth in numbers is slow in coming. Instead, trusting that God’s Word will not return to him empty, he will patiently and persistently preach the Word, trusting God to produce the results at his time.
- **Humble** – The pastors we look for will not be men who assume a superior attitude over against those in their care. Rather, with the Apostle Paul they will see themselves as the “least” of God’s people who “do not even deserve” to be called pastors (cf. 1 Cor 15:9). The only boasting we want to see in them is “boasting in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ga 6:14).
- **Evangelical Spirit** – We know that there is always a temptation to try to get things done by the law. It’s quicker—at least in producing outward changes. But we train our students to be *evangelical* Lutheran pastors, and we pray that is what they will truly be. We pray that they won’t try to accomplish with the carrot and stick of the law what can be properly accomplished only by the wooing and winning of the gospel.
- **Evangelistic Spirit** – We want our pastors to be filled with a “holy restlessness,” a dissatisfaction with the status quo, an inner compulsion to go with the gospel. We don’t want them to be satisfied only with tending to their little flock, not while the souls of men are dying and they have the one message that turns death to life.
- **Cultural Sensitivity** – I am thinking here about a desire to bring the gospel to every element of the society in which the national pastors are working, an attitude that does not think less of people because of their lower economic, educational, or social level, an attitude that considers every segment of society as a mission field since Christ died for every segment of every society.

- ***Equipping the Saints Mindset*** – Our desire for our pastors is that they become 2 Timothy 2:2 kinds of workers, equipping others for ministry just as they themselves have been equipped for ministry. We do not want them to see themselves as or to function as dictators or one man shows, but rather as partners with the members of their congregations. Nurtured and equipped by their pastor, together they bring the gospel to the people of their community.

That brings us to the question, “How do we go about producing such ministers of the gospel?” (We know full well that the real work is done by the Holy Spirit, but at the same time we recognize that he uses human beings such as you and me in this work).

From this brief survey it has not been difficult to see the one common denominator in the way Jesus and Paul trained people for the ministry: They trained them by word and by example. Perhaps the best word to describe the training model that Jesus and Paul provided is “mentor.” Mentoring has been defined in the following way:

A nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development.²

Using this definition and drawing on the way Jesus and Paul trained men for the ministry, let me suggest four ways by which we function as mentors and trainers for the ministry.

1. We function as mentors and trainers for the ministry by teaching our students the whole counsel of God.

This is essential. Above all we want the men serving in our churches to be men of sound and solid faith. Faith comes and faith grows “from hearing the message” (Ro 10:17) and in no other way. If we want our national pastors to exhibit a concern for the truth, they must first have *learned* the truth, of course. You cannot cling to and you cannot give away to others what you yourself don’t possess.

We are in the midst of an intense self-study at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. It began during the last school year and will continue through a good part of this school year. As we did in our last self-study, we have been wrestling with how to bring more “practical” subjects into the curriculum. What makes it difficult to do this without adding another year to the program is the fact that we are convinced that our core biblical, systematic, and historical theology curriculum, though we may finesse it and tweak it here and there, is essential for the training of a confessional Lutheran pastor. We don’t want to short-change our students. We want to introduce them to the whole counsel of God as did Jesus and Paul for their students. I am assuming you want nothing less for the men you train.

2. We function as mentors and trainers for the ministry by relating what we teach to the ministry.

I’m not thinking here of just the obvious things. It’s not difficult to demonstrate how homiletics and education and other practical theology courses relate to the ministry. I’m thinking also of the courses in church history, Old and New Testament, and systematic theology.

You perhaps recall from your seminary days the junior course in New Testament isagogics, in which we read a good share of the New Testament in the Greek. It is a most challenging course in terms of the amount of material to be covered. To get finished with the Synoptic Gospels in a quarter, for example, we have to cover at times 40-50 verses in a 50-minute class period. Yet, when I taught New Testament isagogics, I always made sure to spend some time each class period addressing the question, “What does

² Leona English, *Mentoring in Religious Education* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1998), p. 213.

this have to do with the ministry?” By way of application, I would often bring up something from my years in the ministry that related to the text at hand. In my course evaluation for the class I would generally have a question something to this effect: Did you think that the time spent on application to the ministry was worthwhile? The answer I often received? “It was the best part of the course,” which, upon reflection, may or may not have been a compliment. Regardless, I do believe that we benefit our students when we help them to find answers to the questions: What does this material we are studying mean to me as a *Christian*? And, what does it mean to me as a future *pastor*?

3. We function as mentors and trainers for the ministry by modeling what we teach as we interact with our students in the classroom.

As we noted when surveying how Jesus and Paul trained workers for the ministry, what they taught they modeled. In some ways, perhaps, it was a little more natural for them to do this; for theirs was far from the formal seminary setting we have come to know, whether it be in Mequon or on the world mission field. Their seminary was always in session. There was no distinction between inside the classroom and outside of it. Their students were always in the classroom, and classes always were in session.

Because of the way we do things, we have to look at both settings—inside and outside of the classroom. But modeling can, and should, be occurring in both settings.

We should not underestimate our function as role models in the classroom. As a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary the past eighteen years I have come to see that the importance of an instructor’s role as “model” for the ministry can hardly be over-emphasized. Yes, we train for ministry by what we *say*; but we also train by how we *interact* with our students, thereby providing a positive, or in some cases perhaps negative, ministry model.

Every one of the ministry traits we have been discussing—love for souls, concern for the truth, importance of one’s devotional life, dedication, a non-judgmental attitude, patience, humility, an evangelical as well as an evangelistic spirit, a sensitivity to people of cultures different from one’s own, an equipping-the-saints mindset—every one of these can be and should be demonstrated by people such as you and me. You can teach humility, you can teach patience, for example; but when your students see in you what you are teaching, it is more deeply impressed on them, “This is what a Christian, this is what a pastor, is like.” How important for us, then, to be people of the Word ourselves so that the Holy Spirit is given the opportunity to produce in us the traits we desire to see in the workers in our churches!

4. We function as mentors and trainers for the ministry as we interact with our students outside of the classroom and give them opportunities to observe as we do the work of the ministry ourselves.

Because of the informality of their “seminary” training, this occurred more naturally as Jesus and Paul trained men for the ministry. Their pupils lived with them. They observed their teachers in action day in and day out.

It is a little more difficult in a situation where pupils are with their teaches for the most part only in a classroom-type setting. It may well require some extra effort to create opportunities for out-of-classroom student interaction and observation of their teachers “in action.”

Is it worth the effort? In two recent books³ Roy B. Zuck makes a strong case for giving students opportunities for such out-of-classroom observation of their teacher. He sees it as essential for the mentoring process. He quotes from a study of Robert Wilson: “Repeatedly, one of the overriding differences found between faculty and students who engage in effective teaching and learning and those

³ *Teaching As Jesus Taught* (Grand Rapids: Baker), 1995, and *Teaching As Paul Taught* (Grand Rapids: Baker), 1998.

who do not was the amount of interaction—both inside *and outside* the classroom—that students and teachers have with one another.”⁴

Looking to the ministry of Jesus, Zuck writes: “One of the ways Jesus modeled what he taught was by associating with his disciples daily for several years. They could see how he lived, how he reacted, how he answered opponents, how he expressed compassion for the needy, how he handled interruptions, how he prayed, how he was patient, how he forgave.”⁵

With regard to the Apostle Paul, Zuck brings out that “Paul’s presenting himself as one whose life is to be imitated was a powerful pedagogical tool. Students often learn as much (if not more) by seeing how their teachers live and teach as they do by what their teachers teach. Paul ranked his example alongside his teaching and instruction. In fact, it constituted a part of his teaching and instruction.”⁶

If mentoring is a key part of ministerial training and mentoring includes not just teaching but serving as role model, then it is essential that our students also observe us out of the classroom modeling what a pastor is and what a pastor does. In that way they not only hear us talking about the need to love our people, to be evangelical, patient, and humble in our dealings with them; they actually observe us doing this. They not only hear us talking about the importance of outreach with the gospel; they also observe us in action as we do the work of an evangelist ourselves. It is helpful to *be* pastors, to a certain degree at least, in order to *teach* what it means to be a pastor.

It appears to me that this dual role as teacher/example/doer of ministry is even more important on a world mission field than it is in the United States (though I don’t discount its importance here either). Here our seminary students have the opportunity to see the pastoral ministry modeled by others besides their seminary professors. They can look to the pastor of the church in which they grew up. For many, in fact, that pastor was their father. Through the seminary’s early field training program in the junior and middle years and its year of vicarship, students again observe pastors at work. In addition, a high percentage of seniors serve as student assistants in Milwaukee-area congregations. Clearly, our students don’t lack ministry models whom they are able to closely observe as they carry out their ministries.

Even with that, the seminary is concerned that its professors also serve as ministry models. This is the main reason for the recently-instituted parish sabbatical program which puts our professors back into the parish ministry for six months every eight years. The students are not able to observe the professor during this time he functions as a parish pastor; but it is our hope that when the professor returns to the classroom what he has observed and done while in the parish will benefit his teaching and interaction with his students.

On the world mission field there is not such a large body of ministry role models available. Often those training for the ministry are first-generation Christians (or at least Lutherans). In many instances they have not been long-time members of congregations where for years they could see their pastor in action. It is understandable, then, that they would look, more so than their brother seminarians in the USA, to their teachers as models for the ministry. In that respect they are somewhat similar to the students of Jesus and Paul. Their teacher—by what he teaches and by what he does—will be the primary role model that demonstrates to them what a minister of the gospel is.

If their teachers only teach and don’t do the work of the ministry themselves and if the students have no other example to look to, they will be deprived of an essential part of ministry training—observation of someone actually carrying out the work of the ministry.

In the Lutheran Church of Central Africa, you may know, they have tried to solve this problem by calling an experienced pastor from the United States to serve, not as a teacher, but as a pastor of one of the congregations. The intention is that he serve as a role model to help students see what it means to be a pastor. That is one way of doing it, but a better way, it would appear to me, would be that our

⁴ Robert C. Wilson et al., *College Professors and Their Impact on Students* (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1975), 167 (italics added).

⁵ Roy B. Zuck, *Teaching As Jesus Taught*, p. 68.

⁶ Roy B. Zuck, *Teaching As Paul Taught*, p. 122.

seminary teachers function also as pastors to some degree. In that way they would both be *teaching* the work of the ministry and *modeling* it.

I know that this could militate against the indigenous church policy under which we are working, which emphasizes training people to do the work of the ministry and not doing the work of the ministry ourselves. But, must it be an either/or? Cannot the missionary who is training men for the work of the ministry also be doing the work of the ministry himself, e.g., preaching, teaching, evangelizing, functioning as a *Seelsorger* for a flock? You will have to help me here on that, since you know what is currently being done in your field and what changes could/should be made. My point, as drawn from this study of the ministry of Jesus and Paul, should be abundantly clear by now: The ministry is caught as well as taught. Ideally, therefore, ministry preparation will include both ministry instruction that is heard with the ear and ministry practice that is observed with the eye.

May the Lord of the Church enable us all to be ever more fully both teachers and models of the ministry.