

Title Paul and Barnabas—Team Ministry in Evangelism and Nurture
Speaker Marvin Kauffman
Speaker's Residence Weldon, IA
Date Thursday, April 7, 2011
Venue Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Intercourse, PA
Program Beachy Amish Mennonite Ministers' Meeting 2011
Transcriber Cory A. Anderson (www.beachyam.org)
About this document: *This transcript may be distributed freely. The sermon was transcribed during the live presentation and then later edited for clarity. The material presented is not necessarily endorsed by the above organization(s) or transcriber(s). The content of this transcript is not guaranteed, though every effort was made for accuracy and clarity.*

Greetings in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ: Lord of the Church, and intimate Friend. If your minds can hold a little more and be creative at this point, imagine with me being a member of the early church in Jerusalem. You've heard a lot about Saul, the persecutor, and he's known to be vicious very zealous, and very determined. You breathe a sigh of relief that he's on his way to Damascus. Then you hear this rumor that Saul has been converted. He's joining himself to those that are the Way. He's now back in Jerusalem. He'd like to join our meeting. Wait a minute! What a better way for a persecutor to wreak havoc in the church, to come in among us and find out who we are. They are holding him at arms length. We read that in Acts 9:26 [*read verse*]. They believed not that he was a disciple. Someone came to the rescue, but Barnabas took him and brought him to the Apostles and declared unto him... If Barnabas believes this man is genuine, we do too. He not only laid his reputation on the line but also his life. First, introduce, him then get him involved. Let's think a little bit. You're considering Paul's impact on the early church and Paul's impact on the Gentile ancestry. What if Barnabas hadn't introduced Paul, where would you and I be? Or what about our Epistles? We'd be missing 1/3 of our epistles. In team ministry, it's important we accept and trust each person on the team, especially new ones. Bring them in and encourage them in the ministry. This was the beginning of team-ministry for Paul and Barnabas.

Paul and Barnabas's team-evangelism and nurture: I found that to be a rather large subject. Evangelism is something in itself. Team ministry may be. I have taken the liberty to focus on the team aspect, but not how that relates to evangelism and nurture. For nurture and evangelism to take place, there needs to be a teamwork--a unity, a working together. When there is conflict, the body may suffer malnourishment. There may be exceptions if there are strong men. If there is conflict, most times the body is going to suffer until we become sick. We have a tremendous responsibility to work together well, but even more for the sake of the body-- a building of the kingdom. We need to work together well as a team.

When I told my family about this assignment, they thought Paul and Barnabas was not a good demonstration of team ministry. That was a one-time incident. It was not a pattern; we want to focus on the patterns, and later draw lessons from the contention. I want to focus on the character of the lesser known, Barnabas. Turn to Acts 4:36, the church is together and they are sharing--bringing gifts of money. In verse 36 it says, [*read verse*]. Some other translations say "a son of

encouragement.” What a nickname! The meaning of surname meant a characteristics or occupation but when he was called the son of encouragement,--it highlighted an outstanding encouragement. How much we need encouragers in the body of Christ! I think we need to encourage each other on the ministerial team.

Sometimes we’re not quite sure how to do that. Right now, I’m grappling with a question. How does one encourage a team member and his wife? We as a congregation felt keenly the loss of a young brother in the congregation. I could only try to imagine what it would be like to lose a son. How do we encourage them, lift them up? We pray for them, we try to be there for them, but how do we be there for them? How do we help a person walk through this, especially one who was on your ministerial team. First thing we see is an encouragement on Barnabas’ part, he had land and he sold it. This was pretty generous. This is the encouragement of giving. That encouraged not only the recipients, but encouraged others to give. Our financial giving is not really known--and that’s Scriptural. It’s not just giving finances but we willing to give of our time and energy. Of finances, I don’t think it would be well to think, we give a lot of time--others should give the money. We shouldn’t be slackers in that.

Barnabas extended the right hand of fellowship with Paul. I don’t know how it felt, when Paul was introduced to the brothers--the encouragement of fellowship and the encouragement of involvement. We read that in Acts 11:19, [*read verses*]. I think this whole thing of being an encourager is tied closely together. He was glad and encouraged them all. A generic term--a good man, an appreciated man. He was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. Many people were added to the Lord. Barnabas is sort of heading it up--a zealous young man with tremendous potential. This young man went back to Tarsus. Barnabas remembers him, he makes that trip to Tarsus, and gets Saul, saying “I need your help, and you will fit the bill at Antioch.” I need your help: get you involved. Why doesn’t he take initiative? Barnabas saw potential and got him involved. Here we have this spiritual giant asking this newcomer--a rookie--to come and help him. That must have been a tremendous encouragement to Saul. In that process, there would be training taking place from Barnabas to Saul. As ministerial teams, we must involve our lay brethren, even those who are less experienced, less trustworthy perhaps. Maybe some don’t even want to be involved. There are many needed to just nudge, to just say, I need you for this. Also, in the ministering team (for those who have been on longer, especially bishops) we need to get the newer and the younger involved. I would admit I don’t say this out of experience. We don’t have any young men on our team at present. I speak somewhat from observations and life lessons learned. It may be easier and faster (and probably better) if we did it ourselves, but we need to get our children involved. It doesn’t encourage our children if we just do it. It’s the same way on the leadership team, sometimes it’s easier, faster and you can get it done better if you do it yourself, rather than put time and energy into other team members. The mark of a good leader is one who knows how to delegate. It relieves us of a lot of stress. It’s a benefit to those involved in the task. Soon after my ordination, our late Bishop John Yutzy assigned to me a few messages, and he assigned one rather difficult. But somehow he entrusted me with this subject after only being ordained several months. That was encouraging.

We have the encouragement of following--a willingness to take second place. In the first missionary journey, we have the team referred to as Barnabas and Saul. It’s a good possibility Barnabas was older but in Christian experience he was the senior. It doesn’t seem long until

something begins changing-- the incident later where Saul takes the initiative to confront the sorcerer, even though Barnabas was right there. Verse 13 refers to Paul and his company; it doesn't say Barnabas and company. It was Paul that stood up and addressed the people. Paul was the one that got stoned. More often, the team is referred to as Paul and Barnabas. Paul had a more aggressive leadership style; and over time, there was a natural shift. How did that make Barnabas feel? Well, you say, that's why they had contention later. Somehow Barnabas learned to back off, and let Paul exercise his natural gifts as a leader to the one who is more outspoken and encourage him in his leadership gifts. This may be the more difficult areas of team ministry; sometimes it simply has to do with who comes on the team--to and back off and let others who haven't been on the team as long gradually assume more and more of the leadership. I don't know what that is like, but it could be difficult to make that transition.

How many of you, brethren, are the age of 50-60, have a family business in which one or more of your sons are employed? [*Maybe 20-30 raise their hands*] If you're in that age group (in time), you need to sort of back off a little and let your sons become more involved in decision-making, and exercise more and more of the leadership. Sometimes, it seems like such a short time ago, I was teaching them and now they are telling me how to do it. I don't know why they remember things so much better than I do. I find that my sons have been good with the business. They're fast, innovative, have good ideas on how to build, ideas of how to make the workplace more efficient. I could say, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it. That would squelch their whole motivation of being involved, and there is no better way to have your business become stagnant and lose the interest of your son. Recently the founder and director of a well known charitable organization had allowed the younger to step up. If the church is going to prosper and maintain an intense interest, we must be willing to change, take suggestions from the younger. They are more innovative, more visionary, and allow them to take more responsibility. There is a sense we do that cautiously and do not compromise Biblical principles. We do have a tendency to drift. Where there has been less time to observe, that tendency seems to be a little strong, simply because they have not had the benefit of the experience--not because they're less committed. It's a dilemma: back off on leadership, and at the same time, see increasing drift. We may think we're called upon to compromise principals, when it is only personal preferences. Maybe sometimes we find too much of our sense of significance is wrapped up in what we're doing, rather than enough in our relationship in Jesus Christ, and desire to serve the kingdom. In a committee meeting, we pull out our date books for the next meeting, and we have a board meeting here and revival meetings there--don't we like to do things? I think that may be somewhat of a man-thing. Our wives help us, and we say, no! Sometimes, it gets past the feeling of good because of what everyone is trying to get you to do.

I'd like to read and some books have spoken to me much in the last several years. This one book is straight forward and brutally honest. It has a testimony. I first read this book from Paul Miller, and it's from the founder of Moody Bible Institute. [*Reads account, about the founder thinking he has not accomplished much and has grown tired of what other people think-- jealousy and anxiety. Bottom line, I get tired of me, but I never get tired of Jesus*]. If life is all about me, and I get to the end of life, that's going to be a sad day; because all I would have is me. But if my life is about Jesus, He'll be there with me while I'm waiting for the nursing home dinner bell. He'll be more wonderful. He will talk with me and I won't have any trouble hearing Him. You're almost home, Joe, He'll say. We'll be having such a grand time of fellowship that we might miss

the bell.

What a detriment to our team, if we find too much good in what we're accomplishing. The time will come when we can't do those things. What will we have left?

What about the contention? I was going to read it, so you know I'm not making it up, but you know this story--you believe it. There came a time when Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along, but Paul said no and had reason for questioning his motive. Paul said we're not taking him along. Barnabas said yes. The contention was so sharp between them that they parted way. Barnabas took John Mark. This could have been left out of the record and it would look good for them (and make it easier to preach this message). One observation is that even godly men--pillars--actively involved in the kingdom work have enough humanity to get involved in contentions. What's new? We would know that without this example. Where there are people, there will be disagreements, and we should be able to work through those contentions, before it is ascribed as sharp causing us to part ways, perhaps even with contention still unresolved. I don't think we should use this story to justify, however. Somehow, because of Paul and Barnabas, we would like to find some way to justify the tension, gloss it over, and it is not justified that they ended up two teams. We can't justify two churches. If having two teams instead of one was a good thing (and it probably was), it simply was because we serve a God who has a keen ability for what Satan intends as evil and turn it around for good. Satan did to Jesus the worst thing, but it may be one of the best things that happened to mankind. It was certainly not because of contention, but despite it, God was able to work.

I tend to think, somewhere early on (I know they didn't have phones or emails) on there was some effort made for reconciliation. I say this for three reasons. First, unresolved contention almost always results in some level of bitterness, even though it is almost indistinguishable. Paul's second missionary journey seems to be quite crippled, just like the others. Neither do bitter men make very Biblical role models, especially when it comes to Biblical relationships. There's so much mentioned in Paul's writing about how we work through contention. I Corinthians 13, Romans 12:18--"If it is as much as possible on your part, as much as in lies within you, you live peacefully with all men." I'd like to think he made efforts to resolve the conflict. Paul later said about John Mark, that he is profitable to be in the ministry. If this was an ongoing ministry, would Paul's pride allow him to say that? I think this was resolved, and not possibly soon. It reminds me of--let me say this yet. If there is a need to part ways (sometimes there may be), do not sweep the contention under the carpet but seek to resolve it. This whole incident reminds me that one of the most basic elements to have team ministry to be effective is what Laban brought to us last evening reading Psalms. I really believe that to work together well as a team, to be effective in both nurture and evangelism, we need to have broken spirits--the spirit of brokenness. What does it mean to be broken in spirit? Permit me to read again. [*Reads an excerpt from a book about works being built and others bringing it to ruins, but to accept it--it is brokenness*]. May God help us on our ministerial teams.