

Pastor Scott L. Harris
Grace Bible Church, NY
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Body Life: Living in Christ's Church
Romans 12:1-13; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12 & 13

Introduction

My subject for today's sermon is something I need to address periodically, but since the shut down of churches - and society - by government over reaction to SARS-CoV-2, it is something that has become even more of a priority. There was concern expressed from the beginning about what would happen when we were forced to go to only online streaming of the worship service and then using conferencing software for our Bible studies and fellowship groups. That concern has just become greater as the length of time churches have been prohibited from meeting has been stretched, and there is not and will not be any clear end to restrictions imposed by pestilential socialistic totalitarianism for a long time to come. Frankly, I believe the wanna be masters in Albany have purposely designed their restrictions to keep churches shut down for as long as possible and hinder us from normal and proper fellowship even as the door is cracked open slightly to opening back up. However, what such secular and pagan politicians mean for evil, God uses for good, and the true church of Jesus Christ can and will overcome all hindrances to faithfully carry out God's design for His people. We will find solutions to overcome the obstacles placed before us as the church has always done throughout the ages and around the world.

I appreciated David's message last week on a Biblical Theology for Social Media very much. The Kipling poem was haunting in its current application though it was written a century ago. Truth eventually prevails over popular fads. I especially appreciated the part of the sermon that pointed out the positive aspects modern technology has brought to us even in social media. While there are many dangers inherent in social media from the multiplicity of temptations within them and carried by them, those who pursue godliness can overcome them just as promised in the Scriptures and use them for God's glory. Remember 1 Corinthians 10:13, "*No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*" That is as true in dealing with technology and social media as it is with anything else. However, it only works when you do what God commands. He provides a way of escape or a path of endurance, but you must take that path to escape and follow Him to endure. Learn God's word so that you can apply its truth to life and make your life count for eternity. Redeem the time you have on this earth by pursuing righteousness.

A blessing that has been noted in many churches is the number of people that join in for sermons and teaching materials that are posted on the internet. It has not been uncommon for the number of those who are watching through digital media to exceed the number of people that normally attend. Certainly there is a negative in that small churches without the resources to do this are being shut out of ministering to their congregation and may end up folding as people get used to watching material from larger churches. But even then, an innovative pastor can still find a way to minister as have several men I talked to a couple of weeks ago. One man lives in an area where internet is not reliable and most of his people are not hooked up to it anyway, so he records material either on dvd or cd and then hand delivers it to the people in his congregation.

We have maintained a website with written material for over 20 years and that has been used by people around the world. We have live streamed our worship services for a couple of years, so the lock-down has not changed what we do with that other than increase the urgency to make improvements in our equipment. However, I have noticed a great increase in the number of views even reaching to three times our normal in service attendance - and probably higher since a single view may include multiple

people. In addition, the recording remains available so even more people access it over time. That is something to praise God about!

A direct blessing of the government mandated shut down for us has been forcing us to use a way to redeem the time which I have been resisting for quite a few years. Specifically, that is using conferencing software so that more people can join in an active discussion in a Bible study or fellowship meeting. I was told years ago that we needed to do this, but I did not want to go through the hassles of learning another program, setting up the equipment or having to adapt the way in which I teach. I repent. I should have done this years ago as it quickly became apparent even within our own congregation that we have many more people that want to participate than can do so if they have to physically come to the church location. Zoom meetings are certainly not ideal, but they have certainly increased participation, and that is something for which we should praise God.

That being said, there are negatives to these mediums. Streaming and recorded sermons and teaching sessions are passive in nature for those watching. People can get the information, which is good, but they are not able to interact with each other and that cuts off a major aspect of church ministry. The zoom sessions allow for interaction, but the normal breaking off into smaller groups to discuss life, what God is doing, and to pray does not happen. In short, while the increased access through electronic mediums is good, body life, the interaction of the congregation in using their spiritual gifts to minister to one other, is hindered at best or even blocked completely. Teaching is an extremely important part of church ministry, but body life of individuals ministering to each other is also extremely important. Without vibrant body life, the church is left weak, anemic, and susceptible to spiritual disease. My sermon today will focus on the importance of body life and suggest some practical ways for us to not only maintain, but increase the vigor of our church health. The only reason for a church to decline even under such restrictions as is currently placed upon is spiritual sloth.

The Importance of Body Life

There are three key passages that describe the church as the body of Christ and explain how it is to properly function. They are Romans 12:1-13; Ephesians 4:11-16; and 1 Corinthians 12 & 13. I have preached 18 expositional sermons working through these passages, so obviously I cannot cover all of that in just one sermon. However, I do want to refer to each of these passages and point out the nature and importance of church body life.

Romans 12:1-13 is our starting passage which begins by referring back to Paul's explanation of the gospel and salvation in the previous 11 chapters. ¹ *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.* ² *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.* The rest of what Paul states in the passage is based on being a living sacrifice who is being transformed.

Verse 3 describes the attitude we are to have. *"For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith."* Humility is to be a key component in the exercise of whatever spiritual gift God gives to you. Verses 6-8 lists some spiritual gifts along with the manner in which they are to be used - prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving with liberality, leading with diligence and mercy with cheerfulness. Why should we do this? Because, as stated in verse 5, *"we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."*

In verses 9-12, Paul briefly describes the interaction of believers with one another regardless of any particular gift. Please take note as I read those verses that everything listed requires personal interaction. They cannot be done by passively watching someone speak. ⁹ *"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good."* ¹⁰ *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;* ¹¹ *not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;* ¹² *rejoicing in*

hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,¹³ contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.”

Body life is the natural result of being saved by the mercies of God so that you become a living sacrifice for the glory of God as you are transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Ephesians 4:11-16 is next. *¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ. ” ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”*

Here is what I want to stress from this passage. First, please carefully note that the offices of apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor - teachers within the church are to be filled with gifted men whose purpose is to train Christians to minister to each other so that the church, the body of Christ, can be built up. The apostles and prophets laid the foundation of the church with Jesus Christ being the cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20), and the offices of evangelist and pastor-teacher are still active. The job that Dominic has as an evangelist and that I have as a pastor - teacher is to train believers to minister to each other. Dominic will place an emphasis on how to proclaim the gospel. My priority is the clear teaching of what God has revealed in the Bible and training you to study the Bible for yourself, but this passage also makes it clear I am to help you learn to use your spiritual gifts, whatever they may be, so that the whole church body can be built up.

Too often people in churches fall into the trap of thinking that it is the job of the pastor to do the work of the ministry, and tragically, that is a common model found in churches. Staff are even often called Assistant Pastors for they are seen as helpers to the Senior Pastor to carry out the work of the ministry. That may be common, but it is wrong. The ministry of the church belongs to the whole church. Church leaders are to equip the individuals in the church to carry out the ministry. If that is not being done, then the church will be limited by the singular abilities of the pastor and therefore will be anemic at best but will more likely be crippled, perhaps severely so.

Notice the emphasis in verse 16 that each individual is needed for the whole to be healthy and mature. The analogy is one of a body with each part - hands, feet, legs, arms, torso, neck, head, etc. - all fitting together with each joint helping to hold the whole thing together and being able to grow. Paul will make stronger use of the same body analogy in 1 Corinthians 12. But quickly note how many things are dependent on every part of the body working together. In verses 13 - Unity of the faith. Knowledge of the Son of God. Full maturity. In verse 14 - Stability and protection from false doctrine and teachers. In verse 15 - Growing to become like Christ.

This was one of the first passages I preached from when I first come here 29 years ago, and it is a passage I have frequently gone back to whenever I needed to preach on this topic. The result has been that we do far better than most churches in active participation in ministry by the people in the church. It is not uncommon in churches to find that only 5-10% of the people do 90% of all the work. I am grateful that is not uncommon for me to hear about some need in the church long after someone else has ministered to that person and need. That is the way Christ intended it to be. The whole body is building itself up in love.

1 Corinthians 12 & 13 is the third passage I want to mention. This is far too long for me to cover today, but I do want to point out some key thoughts from those chapters.

The context of 1 Corinthians 12-14 is Paul addressing the question of what it means to be spiritual.

The Corinthians had wrong ideas about it due to their pagan background in which the pinnacle of spirituality was the god or goddess taking you over. One manifestation of that was speaking in tongues. It was a self centered and proud spirituality in which you compared yourself to others to compete for prestige and position. Though the Corinthians were not lacking in any gift (1 Cor. 1:7), their lack of true spirituality resulted in the divisions and factions among them (1 Cor. 1:10; 11:18).

Paul began by telling them that though there were a variety of spiritual gifts, ministries and effects or powers, each of those were given by the same Spirit, Lord and God, and all of them were for the common good (vs. 4-7). There is no such thing as a spiritual gift or ministry that is for yourself. Certainly you will be blessed by it too, but its purpose is for the common good of all.

Paul then gives in verses 8-10 a first list of specific gifts, all of which were the kinds of gifts that would attract attention to the one manifesting them - word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, distinguishing of spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues. He then again strongly emphasizes that all of these things came by the Spirit who *“distributed to each one individual just as He wills.”* In other words, no one has any reason to be proud about whatever spiritual gift, ministry and power they have because all of it comes as the Spirit desires, and all of it is for the common good of the whole body. Those things are a reflection of God’s grace, not your personal ability or worth.

In verses 12 & 13 Paul stresses both the unity and diversity of the church saying, *“For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.”* ¹³ *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”* Contrary to Pentecostal theology, every believer is baptized by the Spirit at salvation, and as verse 7 & 11 point out, any spiritual gift is a manifestation of the Spirit.

Starting in verse 14 Paul begins an analogy using the physical body to explain the nature of the church, the body of Christ. A body is made up of many parts, but it still just one body, and every part needs the other parts for the whole body to function and be healthy. Paul even uses absurdities to point out these facts. One body part, a foot, can’t say because it is not a different body part, a hand, it is not a part of the body (vs. 15-16). Each body part is a member of the body. At the same time, no body part can claim to be the whole body. As Paul states in vs. 17, *“if the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?”* Paul then emphasizes again in verse 18 God’s sovereignty in what you are within the body by saying, *“But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.”*

Paul then goes on to stress the need of each part of the body including those parts that do not get much attention. Verses 21-22, *“And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; or again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”* ²² *On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.”* The fact is that those parts of our body you give little attention to (the seemingly, less presentable) are actually much more important than what you do pay attention to (the more honorable, presentable). Humans pay a lot of attention to their appearance giving great consideration to their hair, but you can easily live without hair, but you cannot live without your kidneys or liver, body parts which you seldom think about until you have a problem with them.

The need of every body part emphasizes the unity that is to exist in it. Paul even states in verse 25 that he is saying these things *“so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members have the same care for one another.”* That was a rebuke to the Corinthians since they were very divided. He continues in verse 26 with a very pragmatic aspect of being one body. *“And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored all the members rejoice with it.”* If your toe hurts, then your whole body becomes focused on the pain in that toe. If you are honored because of the skill by which do something, then you as a whole person is honored and not just the dexterity of your fingers in playing the tune or fashioning the object.

Paul then gives another list in verses 28-30 of the variety of gifts and ministries God gives to the church. This is a different list than the earlier one with an emphasis that no one has all gifts and no gift is given to all. ²⁸ *And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.* ²⁹ *All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?* ³⁰ *All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?"*

What does all this mean in a practical sense? Upon salvation, every believer becomes a part of the body of Christ, which is the church. God then gives a variety of gifts, ministries and empowerment to those in the church by which they will serve Him and build up the rest of the body to maturity. Every person in that body is important along with whatever gift, ministry and power God has given them because all of it is for the glory of God however He desires. God does not command us to reach some level of achievement compared to other people. He does command us to be faithful to Him with what He gives us. That is the lesson of the parable of the talents in Matthew 25. We are to do whatever we do for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17). We are to remain humble before God and let any exaltation come from Him at the proper time (1 Peter 5:6).

I want to illustrate the importance of these principles using teaching as an example since that is often an exalted gift in churches. So first, if you are gifted in teaching, are you the whole church or even the primary part of the church? The answer is no. Teaching is important, but you can't teach without students, so disciples are also important. You also can't teach without having something to teach, so the Bible is critical and those who have helped you understand it so you can teach it are also important. You also may need a place to teach, which means all those who help to provide and maintain that location are also important. In this dangerous age, you may also need someone to provide security so that you are not intruded upon while you teach. A teacher stands on the shoulders of many others.

Second, what if you value the gift of teaching, but God has given you a different gift such as mercy, does that mean you are not part of the body or important within the body? Of course not. Who do you want visiting you in the hospital or caring for you if you are sick - someone with the gift of teaching or the gift of mercy? Please give me mercy! I am thankful that I have learned to be more merciful from those who have that gift.

That is an aspect of every gift and why every gift is important and needed. You learn how to function in the area in which you are not gifted by those who are so gifted. That is an aspect of discipleship. All Christians are commanded to be compassionate and you learn it from someone gifted in mercy. We are all commanded to be helpful, and you are discipled in it by those who have that gift. All Christians have administrative tasks they must accomplish, and you gain those skills from those so gifted. The same is true in so many other areas. The whole body is built up toward maturity in every area by the variety of people who have a variety of gifts who all disciple each other. That interaction is body life. It is the church in action as it builds itself up and then extends outward to evangelize and minister to the unsaved.

Third, related to these first two points, teaching is usually an up front gift that gets a lot of attention, but in the body, the other gifts that are just as important or even more important though they are often in the background or even hidden. Helps is one of those. I am the one you are looking at and hearing because I am up front, but it took a lot of people a lot of work to make this happen. For example, Jim & Phil were here early this morning starting the set up. A lot of people will help with the break down and storage of the equipment.

Fourth, the same gift can be used in different ways in different ministries. One of the uses of my gift of teaching is in the ministry of preaching. Others with the gift of teaching wouldn't dream of preaching, but they flourish in a classroom type setting or small group. Others with the gift of teaching feel very uncomfortable speaking, but they are adept writers. Then there are those that use their voice and musical

talents to put their teaching into songs that will exhort and edify. The same gift, but different ministries, and all of them important for the glory of God.

Fifth, the same gift can be used in similar ministries with very different empowerments. I preach in a small church, but I know many pastors whose churches are only as large as our adult Sunday School, but then, our whole church only has as many people as the adult Sunday School in some of the large churches. Some preachers are only known to their congregation. Others gain a wider ministry through the internet or conference speaking. Then there are those that have well recognized world-wide ministry. Again, same gift in similar ministries, but very different in scope and breadth of impact on others. Yet, there is no reason for jealousy between any of them because all of it comes from God and is for His glory. If a brother is reaching more people than I am, then praise God for all that he is reaching. If another brother has a limited ministry to a small church, then praise God for those precious folks that God would bless with such a focused ministry to them.

All gifts, all ministries, all empowerments for those gifts and ministries are given by God for His own glory. All of them are needed. All of them are important. All of them make up the body of Christ. Every person in the body of Christ is vital to its health and maturity as the interaction of all of these things take place in body life. That is the church in action in ministry both among its own members, but then extending outward to other believers and to the unsaved to bring them to Christ.

Paul concludes 1 Corinthians 12 with a transition to show them a better way than what they were doing. They thought their particular gift and ministry was important and then ranked each other on how important they might be based on that. 1 Corinthians 13 is the better way, for it is the way of love, which is the hallmark of true spirituality. If you do not have love, then whatever gift you have becomes ultimately worthless.

The description of love Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 is actually a corrective of their failure to demonstrate even those minimal standards. The epitome of love we are to have for each other is seen in Christ and given in His command for us to love one another as He has loved us. True, Biblical, godly love is other centered and self sacrificial. It is the greatest of the three qualities that will abide, the other two being faith and hope.

Practical Suggestions

That is a brief description of body life and its importance. You must use your gifts, ministry and the power given to you by the Holy Spirit to greatest extent of your ability for the glory of God regardless of any government or even biological threats. You must find ways to overcome the obstacles, and you may have to be very creative to do that. Our Christian brothers and sisters in lands of persecution have done this for generations.

Many gifts can operate to at least some extent remotely through technological means. It is not the best, but at least it is something to be able to use live streaming, recording, conference software and telephone calls to do things such as teaching, verbal encouragement and comfort, and to pray with each other. A lot of administrative tasks can be done remotely, but there are a lot of ministries that cannot be done from a distant location. Compassion often needs to be expressed physically. Helps is nearly always something that has to be done with a physical presence. The same is true with hospitality.

The government has placed restrictions that makes it very difficult for much of body life to happen through the normal interaction that will take place in fellowship before and after a church meeting. That is when you become aware of individual needs and the opportunities to use your particular gifts to minister to others. All that really means is that we all must be proactive.

That begins by communicating with each other. Use whatever method you prefer - phone, text, email, facebook, video chat - whatever you need to do, but communicate with each other on a regular basis. Don't wait for someone to call you, you call others.

Next, look for opportunities to use your gifts to help others. Not sure what your spiritual gifts are

yet? Then simply try things out under the simple direction of “see a need, meet a need” and find out how God uses you. The other day someone knew Diane was very stressed in trying to keep her sister alive due to neglect in the hospital she in, so she made a great meal and brought it over and let us know she is praying for Christine. What a blessing!

Do not be afraid to go somewhere. If you take proper precautions, you will be safe and so will those you see. Obviously if you feel sick or have been recently exposed to someone who has been sick, then stay isolated until you are better. But using simple precautions such as hand sterilization before and after a visit, wear a mask or keep your distance, enables you to be in the physical presence of someone that needs your ministry to them.

The rules have loosened, so get together in small groups for mutual encouragement, prayer and using your spiritual gifts. Take extra precautions with those that are either more at risk themselves or take care of those more at risk. You may need to meet outside, or keep some extra distance, or where a mask / face covering when they are near. That is just a matter of thoughtfulness and courtesy.

Let me add here some strong admonition in both directions on this. First, for those who are at less risk, don't assume the person who wears a mask is paranoid. They may have risk factors you do not know about or take care of someone who is at greater risk. Be gracious, for frankly, even if the person has become overly fearful, we are still to love them and try to include them. They need the encouragement of knowing you care about them by extending to them an extra measure of love. For those of you who do need to be more cautious than others, request, do not demand, others meet your level of precaution. Also, do not insist that they must include you in everything they are doing. Love is a two way street.

When Diane and I got married, I did not know if she would walk the aisle or be wheeled down it because her back was already that bad. I gladly gave up a lot of the things I used to do in order to include her in my life. We found things we could both do together. I sacrificed myself because I love her. At the same time and throughout the years we have been married, Diane has always encouraged me and our sons to do things she could not do with us. She insisted we would go bowling as a family, and she came along to watch and cheer. She insisted we go skiing as a family. She could not join us on the slopes, so she waited in the lodge and read while we skied, then fed us lunch and enjoyed the talk around the table about our activities. She sacrificed of herself because she loved us. That is the nature of love.

Body life in any church should reflect that kind of love as each individual makes sacrifices for the good of the others in the body as they seek to minister to one another with whatever gift they have. Body life in any church should have vibrant fellowship because of that love for each other and desire to help one another grow in Christ.

We continue to live in a governmental crisis in reaction to a medical threat. The hindrances to our church body life are testing us as individuals and the church as a whole. Where maturity is revealed, we rejoice and praise the Lord that He has already taken us this far. Where immaturity is revealed, there is opportunity to mature, and rejoice that we know Christ will be faithful to continue His work in us that we may become more like Him and glorify His name.

Introduction

Government restrictions

Review

Hindered, but still blessed

Extending Ministry

Detriments to body life

The Importance of Body Life

Romans 12:1-13

Ephesians 4:11-16

The purpose of church offices

The body and the work of the ministry

1 Corinthians 12 & 13

Context (12:1-3)

Origin and purpose of gifts, ministries and empowerment (12:4-7)

Examples of gifts (12:8-11)

Unity with diversity (12:12-13)

The Body Analogy (12:14-27)

Not one will all, not one in all (12:18-30)

Practical Application in the Church - an example using teaching

None is the whole

All are needed

Those gifted teach those not gifted

Background gifts help those upfront

The same gift used in different ways in different ministries

The same gift used in similar ministries with very different effects

All is given by God for His own glory

The better way is true spirituality expressed in true, Biblical love

Practical Suggestions

Use your spiritual gift to minister to the greatest extent of your ability

While it is good to use your gifts remotely if possible, not all gifts can be done remotely

Be proactive

Find ways to communicate

Do not be afraid

Get together in small groups

Be loving and humble

Body life in the church should demonstrate sacrificial love

Testing of faith is an opportunity for growth.

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up. 2) Count how many times the word "body" is mentioned. Talk with your parents about how the physical body can explain the nature of the church, the body of Christ

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. How has God turned the evil of government restrictions on churches into blessings? What are the positives about using technology to broadcast teaching sessions from churches? What are its limitations? Read Romans 12:1-13. What is the premise of the passage? What attitude are Christians to have? How are Christians supposed to interact with each other according this passage? What requires personal interaction? Read Ephesians 4:11-16. What foundation is laid by the apostles and prophets? What is the primary purpose of evangelists and pastor-teachers in the church? Who is supposed to do the work of the ministry? How do all the parts of the body make it strong and enable it to grow? What does Paul say is dependent on all the parts of the church body working together? Read Romans 12 & 13. What is the context of this passage? What is the source of spiritual gifts, ministries and empowerments? What is their purpose? By what criteria does the Spirit distribute gifts? Are all true Christians baptized by the Spirit? Explain. How is a body both unified and diverse? How does Paul use the physical body as an analogy for nature and function of the members of the church? Why should all Christians be humble in regard to their spiritual gift(s) and ministries? Does any Christian have all gifts? Is there any gift that all Christians have or should have? Can any gift stand alone in ministry? How does a person learn to function and fulfill the commands for those areas in which he is not gifted? Give an example of a gift used in different ways in different ministries? Give an example the same gift used in similar ministries with different empowerments? How do all these things bring glory to God? Why is love the better way than the use of any particular gift? What is the nature of true, Biblical love? Why must you find ways to overcome the obstacles of government oppression? Why not just "submit" to the government dictates? How can technology be used to extend or enhance certain ministries? What are some ministries that require personal involvement and physical presence? How can you communicate with others? How can you overcome fear of meeting with others? What can you do to get a small group of believers together for fellowship? How can you show love to someone who has greater restrictions? How can someone with greater restrictions show love to those with less restrictions? How do you plan to practice "body life" this week?