

"ETHICS IN JEWISH EVANGELISM"
THE BASIS IN RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER JEWISH MISSIONS

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When I arrived at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel, I noticed an article in the March 31, 1985 Travelhost Magazine. It is entitled "The Value of Integrity." What the author, James E. Buerger, emphasizes about integrity can be applied as well to the ethical standard needed among Jewish missions.

Billy Graham and his lengthy ministry has always served as a model for me. That his preaching is not homiletically outstanding, is generally acknowledged. What is remarkable is the humility and integrity he has retained throughout his ministry. Several years ago he was asked if he had to choose between giving one million dollars to the cause of world missions or winning a million people to Christ, what would his choice be. He replied that he would choose integrity. He affirmed that choice again in an interview with Christianity Today Magazine (April 8, 1985), when he said, "I hope I will be remembered most as one who walked in integrity."

When we talk about ethics we are talking about soundness or integrity. That is, when we say we have integrity we mean we are who we represent ourselves as being, doing what we should be doing in the way God would have us do it.

Back in the early 60's when I received my training for the ministry in Princeton Theological Seminary, those of us who were studying to be ministers were required to take a course in church policy which emphasized the right way in doing things in a Presbyterian Church. Sometimes I think I need to apologize for being a minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding matters of doctrine. But one thing for which I am proud of my church is that we were taught and indoctrinated that "everything must be done decently and in order." And I think this is the core of ethics.

In the Presbyterian Church a minister can be defrocked for slandering another minister. It should only be that they could be defrocked for slandering the Savior. A congregation can be disciplined for mistreating its minister. Unfortunately, the same congregation can't be disciplined for ignoring or mistreating the Savior. The integrity of our relationship with others depends on our integrity and relationship with the Lord. But we need principles governing how we relate to one another.

While I was a pastor in St. Louis, Missouri, I was favorably impressed with the ministry of the Midwest Messianic Center. One

of the things that impressed me was the way they would feature different speakers at their Messianic Forum Luncheon. When other Jewish Missions would have deputation speakers in the St. Louis area, Emil Elbe, the Director, would always try to have them as speakers at this forum. He would introduce the speakers from these missions with a graciousness which would uphold them and the ministry of their organizations. I found this remarkable because Emil Elbe, a graduate of Moody Bible Institute, would be quite narrow in his theology and would hold to a separatist position which would not usually allow for fellowship with differing Christians. Nevertheless, for the sake of presenting the Gospel to unsaved Jews he shared his platform and upheld other ministries in their testimonies to the Jewish people. How he managed to reconcile his personal theology and commitment to separatism with these cooperative ventures was that he recognized above all, it was his calling to bring one Gospel to the Jewish people.

We can only explain the bickering, the pettiness and those things which divide us by the fact that certain things are more important to some leaders of Jewish missions than winning Jews to Christ.

In our own ministry in Philadelphia I've been the beneficiary of good ethical conduct on the part of some Jewish missions and I've also been the victim of the bad ethical conduct of others. It is my hope and prayer that in turn I've made others to be beneficiaries more than victims.

In order to maintain integrity we need to recognize there are areas in which we compete. These areas are:

1. Non-relationship. The denial in affirming that we haven't any obligation in relating to others in the same field. It is that partyism described by The Apostle Paul:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

I Corinthians 1:10.

- II. The rape of reality and why it happens. Mike Evans recently sent out an appeal for funds on behalf of Falashan Jews in Israel. The only problem is - the work is non-existent. Weekly I read these representations which are also being sent to contributors of our ministry, and I cringe. This is the rape of reality because there

are Falashan Jews in Israel who need much material and spiritual help. Such an appeal exploits them by representing their need which will not be filled by the organization sending out the appeal letter. Equally bad is the violation of God's people who trust the organization that sent out the appeal letter. It makes me want to withdraw, to disassociate, yet it should make me want to admonish this person who claims that name of Y'shua for his covering. Explain to me why I am so reluctant to admonish him or to expose his fraudulent ways to others.

III. Competitiveness. We compete for the allegiance of the churches rather than seeking to develop the kind of mission that is worthy of support. You can see the competition when missions accept the church mind - set by not upholding one another to local church bodies, covetous of their platform only for themselves.

The competitiveness of reputation is also at stake by those who have embraced the "Diotrephes complex".

"I wrote unto the church, but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not".

III John 9.

The competitiveness is manifested, furthermore, by the Jewish believers whose presence at our individual meetings is so essential to us, the secondary distinctives of which may or may not be actual, i.e., our society is more Jewish or our mission is more sensitive. We are competing for the allegiance of Jewish believers because by their presence and involvement, they enable us to reach others. However, the way we compete is to speak ill of others and their ministries to others.

Shortly after I took over the work in Philadelphia the work burgeoned. We had a Sunday service with 170 in attendance, almost all being Jewish believers. I wasn't as strong of a leader as I should have been and one man who was influential in the congregation, organized behind my back, in collusion, with another minister. One Sunday I had 170 people, the following I had eight. It's a blow from which my ministry never recovered. My share of the blame is that I did not minister as I should have ministered. But the other minister who conspired to take away the Congregation did not uphold me, encourage me exhort me and possible even rejoiced that I was inadequate. Personally, I feel disheartened that those who I married

and whose families I buried now treat me as though I am worthy of their avoidance.

- IV. We compete with one another for the opportunities to achieve. By competing in this manner we fall into duplicating programs and efforts that are already being done well. The purpose of opportunity is to glorify the Lord and win others to Him rather than competing to have a better program than X mission. Our work can enhance what already has been done as well as spark other opportunities which have yet to be conceived.
- V. Competing for staff. We need an ethical code of conduct for recruiting missionaries as well as a system for referring applicants who do not meet our particular qualifications to other societies to which they would qualify.

There are many passages in Scripture that speak to the points above:

"But we have renounced the hidden things of dishonest, nor walking in craftiness nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."
II Corinthians 4:2.

"Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves."
Phillipians 2:3.

"Forebearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Messiah forgave you, so also do ye."
Colossians 3:13.

"Be kindly affectioned to one another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another."
Romans 12:10.

The way that those of us in Jewish evangelism have related to one another in the past is one of the indicators of our failures to evangelize the Jewish people. We don't want to allow our colleagues to draw near to see how poorly we have done. We avoid cooperative efforts because we know we are incapable of upholding our end. We make ourselves comfortable at the expense of those who

we ought to evangelize. The more ambitious of us seek to build our ministries at the expense of others.

Let us pray for one another that we might walk in integrity before the Lord, making ourselves vulnerable to one another for Messiah's sake, freely forgiving those who have wronged us, refusing to embrace past grudges and joyfully upholding the burdens of our brethren.