

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING**

This course is part of the formation program in MFC. It is available to MFC members starting on their second year in MFC. It is an optional course for members, but is a required course for all leaders.

**TOPICS OF THE TALKS**

1. Sons and daughters of God
2. Brothers and sisters in the Lord
3. Growing in faith
4. Knowing God's will
5. Overcoming the world
6. Overcoming the flesh
7. Overcoming the work of evil spirits
8. Repairing wrongdoing
9. The Christian and money
10. Headship and submission
11. Faithfulness and order
12. Unity in Christ

**SCHEDULE**

This course may be given in a variety of ways. It may be given as a monthly teaching over the course of one year. It may be given as a weekly teaching (over 12 weeks), or over consecutive days, or even over two or three weekends.

The course may be handled by the respective chapters or areas, or by the MFC Pastoral Formation Office.

**DYNAMICS**

It is recommended that there be an open forum after every session.

It is also possible to have discussion groups after the talk.

## **FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING**

### **TALK No. 1 : SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD**

#### **Expanded Outline**

##### **A. Introduction**

1. When we are baptized, we become sons and daughters of God.
  - a) But many miss the significance of this fact and the effects of such a relationship.
  - b) Many are insecure, worry about needs, have concern for status. While God does provide, they miss much of what God wants to do for them.
2. Our identity is critical to our well-being.
  - a) Without a proper sense of identity, we are lost and disoriented; we will lack conviction regarding the direction of our lives; we will lack a sense of purpose and confidence.

##### **B. Our Identity.**

1. Distinguish between “identity” and “sense of identity.”
  - a) Identity = an objective fact; a given.  
Sense of identity -- depends on our perception of who we are.
  - b) Ideally, sense of identity should be based on actual identity.
    - \* Story of Kamala and Amala, wolf-girls discovered in 1920 in India. They were raised by wolves and acted like the wolves.
2. The problem of Christians is not who they are, but who they consider themselves to be.
  - a) Not having the right sense of who we are gives rise to various situations that should not be.
    - \* One worries too much about the future.
    - \* One finds it hard to develop close relationships with household members because they are strangers or outsiders.
    - \* One is reluctant to serve as Household Servant because the members are richer or more prominent.
  - b) God wants us to have an accurate and well-developed sense of identity, to conform to what our identity truly is.
3. So what is our identity? 1 Jn 3:1a
  - a) We are children of God!

- \* Jn 1:12. Gal 3:26. Rom 8:14-16.
- \* This is the most tremendous fact of our lives.

- b) Through baptism we have been changed radically.
  - \* Folk story about a beggar who was the king's son. A beggar was discovered to be the king's long-lost son; with his restoration as the king's son, his life changed radically.
  - \* It is a radical change. Changes are immediate. But most begin to understand only gradually.
- c) If we realized this fully, it would make a tremendous impact on our lives. Why is there not a greater impact on many Christians? Because they do not understand "sonship."
  - \* We need to understand the nature of the father-son relationship during New Testament times. This is the key to the significance of our new identity.

#### 4. The father-son relationship in Jesus' time.

- a) A son's identity came from his father.
  - \* Simon bar Jonah (Simon son of Jonah). Jesus son of Joseph. The second name is not a family name but the father's name.
  - \* When people know the father, they also know his son.
  - \* Lk 4:22. People marvelled and could not believe that Jesus was Joseph's son, because he was only a carpenter.
- b) The relationship between the father and son was strong because the relationship was so important in first-century Israel.
  - \* At 6 or 7 years old, the responsibility for a boy's upbringing shifted from the mother to the father.
    - he spent most of his time with his father and was trained by him.
    - the father taught him God's law and also his trade.
    - he became the direct personal representative of his father.
    - he inherited his father's social position.
  - \* Such is no longer the case today.
    - children are not closely identified with their fathers.
    - they spend less time together.
    - they often don't have the same livelihood.

#### 5. Thus, being a son of God is a relationship of tremendous depth and substance.

- a) We are closely identified with God.
 

God will train, govern, care for, and pass on His life to us.
- b) In fact, such was the case with Adam. In the Genesis story of creation, God gave him a wife, provided food, tasked him to take care of God's creation.
  - \* Adam was truly created in God's image and likeness.

6. Thus our most identifying characteristic as Christians is NOT where you live or what you have, but that you are a son or daughter of God.
  - a) Jesus had various facets of his identity: Jew, carpenter, rabbi, miracle worker, son of Mary and Joseph.
    - \* But when asked “who are you?,” Jesus identified himself primarily in terms of his relationship with God the Father.
  - b) The same thing is true for us.

There are three implications and benefits of our sonship: authority, inheritance and access.

### **C. A Son's Authority.**

1. In Jesus' time, a son bore his father's authority.
  - a) Parable of the tenants. Mt 21:33-38.
  - b) If the father's authority was limited, so was the son's (even if he was a better person). Conversely, if the father's authority was substantial, so was the son's (even if he was not worthy or less capable).
    - \* This is a totally alien concept for us. We extol self-made men.
2. Consider the example of Jesus.
  - a) When his authority was questioned, he pointed not to himself but to his Father.
    - \* Jn 5:23b.
  - b) Jesus was a man who exercised authority.
    - \* He taught with authority, gave orders to nature, ordered demons to leave. People were amazed.
    - \* To those who questioned his forgiving the paralytic's sins, he said: “That you may know that the Son of Man has authority ....” (Mk 2:10).
3. For us, *as sons*, we have the Father's authority as well.
  - a) Also, Jesus specifically gave authority to his disciples.
    - \* Lk 10:17-20. Mt 28:18-20.
  - b) We can exercise this authority over problems, obstacles, challenges.
    - \* We need not succumb to them.
    - \* We can have authority over our own wrongdoing, over unruly emotions (our servants, not masters), over the work of evil spirits.
4. Since we are our Father's personal representative, we are to wield His authority for His interests and not merely for our own.

- a) Authority helps make our lives easier to live as Christians, but more importantly we can adequately represent and serve our Father.

#### **D. A Son's Inheritance.**

1. Our inheritance is staggering, because it is everything that the Father has.
  - a) Son = heir. Gal 4:7.
  - b) In New Testament times, a father passed on all he had to his son: his fortune, status in the community, trade, responsibilities, etc.
    - \* Today, "inheritance" = a bundle of money. It is not seen as a whole life passed on.
    - \* Today, children are expected to make it on their own. Not during those times, since being a son meant being assured of an inheritance.
2. Our inheritance is not restricted to the future. Eph 1:13-14.
  - a) We have just received a down payment, the Holy Spirit. But we have a pledge of good things *to come*.
  - b) What we also have received is a foretaste.  
We can experience the blessings *now*.
3. Implications:
  - a) Col 3:23-24.
    - \* We know of our inheritance, so we can act accordingly.
    - \* We can have direction in life. We are assured that it will all be worth it.
  - b) Freedom from anxiety.
    - \* If we have been promised the kingdom, God will take care of us right now.
    - \* Many fears (economic, social, our children, health) bother us and make life less than what God wants for us. But if God loves us, we can transcend these and live only for Him.
    - \* Mt 8:23-27. Story of Jesus in the boat with his disciples during a storm.
      - The boat is our earthly life. Though a storm might rage, God is in the boat with us.

#### **E. A Son's Access.**

1. Eph 2:18. We have a privileged relationship with God, the King of the universe.
  - a) Story of Pres. Kennedy's daughter. During Pres. Kennedy's meeting with heads of state, the little Caroline just came into the room to her daddy.

- b) The son of the king can just enter into his presence where others have to wait for the appointed time.
- 2. We can always come before God and He will always listen to us. Mt 7:7-11.

#### **F. Conclusion.**

- 1. We *are* sons and daughters of God. God went to a lot of trouble to make us such. He sent Jesus, His own Son, to die for us.
  - a) So God is invested in making the most of His relationship with us.
  - b) God wants us:
    - \* to be secure, confident, free from anxiety, happy.
    - \* to bear His authority.
    - \* to receive our inheritance.
    - \* to take advantage of our access to Him.
  - c) In short, God wants to teach us who we are so that we can receive all the benefits that come with our position.
- 2. 1 Jn 3:1a,2a.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

### TALK No. 2 : BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE LORD

#### Expanded Outline

#### **A. Introduction.**

1. In the last talk, we saw how we are sons and daughters of God. Being such, we are also brothers and sisters to one another.
2. This basic relationship as brethren is crucial to our life together as MFC and to the pursuit of the MF vision and mission.

#### **B. The New Testament understanding.**

1. The most common term for Christians in the New Testament is “brothers.”
2. “Brothers (and sisters)” refer to a special and unique way of relating.
  - a) Heb 13:1. 1 Pt 1:22.
  - b) We have a special kind of love among us because we are brothers and sisters in the Lord.
3. In the modern world, we have lost the scriptural meaning of “brothers.”
  - a) Today it refers to children of the same parents. Or it refers to some vague kinship among all men, such as found in the slogan “brotherhood of all men.”
  - b) Scripture, of course, also uses “brothers” in referring to children of the same parents. But Scripture never uses “brothers” to refer to all mankind.
4. In the New Testament, “brother” is used to refer to a special and definite relationship among a group of people. This relationship is the *brotherhood of Christians*. We are brothers and sisters because we are joined together in Christ.
  - a) Non-Christians were considered as “outsiders.” Col 4:5.
  - b) However, we should love all men, even our enemies. Mt 5:43-45.
    - \* But we love our enemies not because they are our brothers, but because God loves them and God wants us to imitate Him.
  - c) The early Christians understood that their faith gave them a distinctive identity which they shared with all Christians.
    - \* They were all members of the same family, “begotten of the Spirit” (Jn 3:8) and born of God (Jn 1:13).

- \* They had the same spiritual blood running in their veins.
- \* This relationship as brothers and sisters transcended relationships with countrymen, with members of the same social class or political group, and even with members of the same natural family. Mt 12:48-50.

### **C. The Old Testament background.**

1. Before the Christians, the Jews, our ancestors in the faith, also understood themselves as brothers.
  - a) For the Jews, “brother” meant more than blood brothers. It meant also the relationship all Jews had with one another as members of the Jewish people.
  - b) Jewish law spelled out the responsibilities of this relationship in some detail. Dt 15:1-3,7-8,23:20-21.
2. The Jews of the Old Testament understood this relationship with each other as different from their relationship with all men. Theirs was a relationship of *full commitment*.

### **D. The Situation Today.**

1. Today Christians are increasingly fragmented and limited in their relationships.
  - a) There are many divisions in the body of Christ.
  - b) When in trouble or in need, one might seek help from friends, officemates or relatives, but ordinarily would not run to a group of Christians, say in his parish.
    - \* Test yourself: go to your parish and talk to the first person you see about a personal loan.
    - \* Even with members of the same parish group or organization, it is not normal to expect them to come to one another’s aid in a total way.
2. Most Christians make limited commitments to other Christians. They can be counted on for some things but the rest of their lives are off limits.

### **E. How our relationship in MFC ought to be.**

1. Being brothers and sisters in the Lord has two practical implications: having a shared life and being committed to one another.
2. In Acts, Christians are described as a group of people devoted to “the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and prayer.” They met every day, ate together, prayed together, and provided for each others’ material needs (Acts 2:42,46). They had a shared life.
  - a) We too are to place our lives in common.



- \* Though we are unable to meet and have activities every day, we recognize that we are truly members of one family.
- b) We are to be cognizant of our brethren's needs and see how we can help satisfy these.
- \* Though we continue to maintain individual ownership of goods, we are open to using our resources to help others. Acts 4:32, 2:44-45.
  - \* Prudence and proper stewardship is required. We do not just give freely to every brother in need.
  - \* The input of MFC leaders may be required at times.
- c) We share not only help, gifts and resources, but also problems.
- \* Personal privacy is not an absolute value. We need to open up our lives in order that we can truly help one another. Gal 6:2.
  - \* Importance of our MFC households. Here we live out more intimately a shared life.
  - \* Leaders are to guide and correct members in their efforts to be faithful to the Christian way of life. 1 Thes 5:12-14. To do so, they need to know the lives of members.
3. Brothers and sisters should place no limits on their responsibilities for each other. It should be *full commitment*.
- a) Brotherhood in Christ, not personal intimacy or friendship, is the basis for the brotherly love spoken of in the New Testament. Thus brotherly care is for all those who share our rebirth in Christ, even to people whom we may not know at all.
- \* For many of us, the only exception to limited commitment is our family. A father makes a full commitment to his wife and children. He is responsible for the things the family does.
  - \* The Christian community is meant to be like that: a properly functioning family, where commitment is full, encompassing all aspects of life.
- b) Full commitment is difficult, but we can live it out because Christ has changed us.
- \* It is not based on feelings. Not emotions, but commitment.
  - \* It is not based on need, desire or attraction. Christian love or *agape* is not the same as romantic love.
  - \* It is not based on deep intimacy. It is not limited to those we know well, nor limited just to our household.
- c) Again, prudence and proper stewardship are important.

## **F. Conclusion.**

1. Being brothers and sisters connotes a special relationship. We are brothers and sisters in Christ and that means we are bound together in a special relationship by the love of Christ.
2. Being brothers and sisters is our most important relationship. It is our primary identification with God's people.
3. It means a full commitment, just like in a properly functioning family.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

### TALK No. 3 : GROWING IN FAITH

#### Expanded Outline

##### **A. Introduction.**

1. Eph 2:8. The good news is that all men can enter into a new relationship with God by believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
  - a) Faith is the key, Jesus is the door, and salvation is the room to be entered.
  - b) Faith in God is the foundation of the Christian life.
2. But many Christians today lack a complete understanding of faith.
  - a) They see the importance of faith just at the beginning of one's Christian life.
  - b) But faith is not only the key to salvation, it is also the way one receives all of God's gifts: healing, guidance, answers to prayers, tongues, etc.
    - \* Thus faith is vital not just at the beginning but throughout our Christian life.

##### **B. The Meaning of Faith.**

1. True Christian faith is a reliance upon God which allows Him to fulfill His purposes within and through His people.
  - a) What are these purposes?
    - \* To form us so our character reflects His own.
    - \* To make us His instruments to touch and speak to others.
    - \* To teach us to pray in such a way that He can guide circumstances which are beyond our control.
  - b) Faith releases this three-fold action of God.
  - c) Faith is a way for us to rest in God.
    - \* We abandon ourselves into the hands of a loving God, acknowledging His greatness and our smallness.
    - \* Faith is not a task, hurdle or obligation, but a gift from God.
2. The basis of faith.
  - a) Faith is not a blind leap or an arbitrary act of will. Rather, faith is a Christian's response to God's revelation of His own nature and plan.
    - \* God reveals Himself in the Bible, in human history, in one's personal experience, and in the experiences of others.

- \* Since God's nature is consistent and His word is faithful, we can count on Him to act in the future as He has acted in the past.
  - Mk 5:25-34.

b) We can know God's nature, desires and purposes in at least three ways.

- \* Through His universally binding promises. The Bible contains many such promises with clearly stated conditions: Lk 11:13; 1 Jn 1:9; Jn 3:16.
- \* Through the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Since God lives within us, we should expect some direct personal communication from Him.
- \* Through an understanding of God's nature. God is merciful and has compassion for us.

3. Three kinds of faith.

a) Believing faith.

- \* Acceptance of the basic doctrinal truths of Christianity.
- \* Such faith is essential, but is not sufficient. Jas 2:19. Even the devil has such faith.

b) Trusting faith.

- \* The belief that God is good, that He loves His people, and that He will care for them always.
- \* This is not merely assent to a creed, but entrusting one's life into God's hands.

c) Expectant faith.

- \* God wants His people to believe, to trust, and to expect. Expectant faith reaches out to Jesus and expects him to act in specific situations.
- \* Expectant faith differs from the other kinds of faith in its active, dynamic nature. Not just a yielding to the will of God and a willingness to endure difficult circumstances, but asking much from God.
- \* For example, it might be God's will for us to accept physical illness, financial distress or other difficulties as part of purification; or He might be using difficulties as a way of testing and building our faith.
- \* Jesus taught his disciples to pray forcefully, even for minor needs. Mt 7:7-11.

4. Faith is an active, external response, not an internal emotion.

a) If tied to emotion, faith becomes a sputtering and inconstant flame.

b) Faith is not primarily an emotion, but a way of thinking, speaking and acting, which contains an emotional element.

c) Faith is an external response.

- \* You have faith if you act in faith.
- \* However, faith is not just a set of specific actions, but also an outlook which should characterize one's entire Christian life.

- d) A Christian filled with faith will rejoice in all circumstances, hope in God's providential control of human events, and avoid attitudes of anxiety, fear, negativism, hostility or discouragement.

### **C. Growing in Faith.**

1. Faith is formed by God. We cannot grow in faith by our own efforts.
  - a) Nevertheless, we can contribute to our growth in faith by confronting some important hazards and by following some helpful steps.
    - b) We cannot build our own faith, but God cannot build it without our cooperation.
2. Hazards to faith.
  - a) Fear.
    - \* Usually stems from personal insecurity, fear of failure, and an over-intense approach to faith.
    - \* To overcome these, we should relax, rest in the Lord, remember God's promises, trust His word, and venture forth with a willingness to make mistakes.
    - \* If we are just starting to grow in faith, we should begin by praying for small things.
    - \* We should be eager to exercise our faith. We should view failures as opportunities to learn about how to exercise faith more effectively.
  - b) Emotions.
    - \* We sometimes try to work up intense feelings of faith for our prayer requests, believing that God will not work unless we have the right feelings or intensity.
    - \* Feelings of faith are helpful, but God's power does not depend on them.
    - \* We should just stand firmly on the rock of God's word.
  - c) Self-doubt.
    - \* We should disregard distorted guilt feelings.
    - \* We should trust more fully in the Lord.
  - d) Satan.
    - \* Some difficulties in exercising faith are caused by satanic opposition.
    - \* We should be aware of the realities of spiritual warfare.
    - \* As thoughts of doubts or fear are planted by satanic forces in our mind, we can rebuke them with God's authority and replace them with the truth.
3. Positive steps toward faith.
  - a) An environment of faith.
    - \* We need to associate with people who will foster growth in faith. This is what we have in the community of MFC.
    - \* We should be faithful to our meetings and activities in MFC, seeing these as a big

help to our faith.

b) Spiritual reading.

- \* Books and magazines that communicate a faith-filled Christian worldview, especially the books of the Servant General.
- \* We should try to read at least one book a month.

c) Hearing God's word. Rom 10:17.

- \* Through the Bible, teachings, prophecy, books, exhortations, and direct words from the Lord.
- \* We should be diligent to hear, absorb, contemplate and love God's word.

d) Personal prayer.

- \* God has adopted us as His sons and daughters, and He delights in answering our prayers. Thus confidence should pervade our prayer.

e) Prayer for faith.

- \* A final step is also the most direct: ask God to increase our faith.

**D. Conclusion.**

1. We in MFC are to be a people of faith.
2. God raised us and intends to use us. Let us stir up the gift of faith that God wants to bestow on us.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

### TALK No. 4 : KNOWING GOD'S WILL

#### Expanded Outline

#### A. Introduction.

1. God's guidance for man is basic and indispensable to the Christian life.
  - a) The essence of Christianity is a loving relationship between God and man. God loves and cares for man; man responds in love by surrendering his will to God.
  - b) Such an intimate personal relationship cannot exist without communication. Thus God must be able to reveal His nature and desires to man.
2. Balance between guidance by principles and guidance by inspiration.
  - a) Many Christians see guidance as a vague set of principles that they should apply to specific situations. Generally, these principles have to do more with prohibition of certain behavior.
    - \* Most would understand that lying, cheating and stealing are contrary to God's will.
    - \* Few however would follow a *positive* vision of a life submitted to God.
    - \* Thus, many Christians submit to God's prohibitions while retaining a firm grip on the direction and daily decisions of their lives.
  - b) Other Christians, having been baptized in the Spirit, go the other extreme.
    - \* They daily search for God's will through signs, inspirations, prophecies and Scripture passages.
  - c) There must be proper balance.
    - \* Such balance is central to Christian growth.
    - \* God will speak, but God's people must know how to listen.
3. The Advocate. Jn 14:16-17,26.
  - a) Jesus promises us the Spirit, who will give us guidance, direction, formation and correction.
  - b) The Lord wants His people to be without doubts, without confusion, and to grow in knowing His will.
    - \* The Lord will not tell us everything we *want* to know, but He will tell us what we *need* to know to be able to follow His will.

#### B. Kinds of guidance.

1. Teaching.

- a) God imparts wisdom and understanding which allow His people to think through decisions and arrive at the direction He desires.

- \* We need to use our minds.

- b) Primary ways of teaching:

- \* The word of God as found in the Bible, Christian tradition, spiritual writings, and the spoken word of the body of Christ.

- Importance of our daily Bible reading, regular reading of a Christian book (especially the books of our founder), discussion of topics in our papers and publications, attendance at prayer assemblies where there are prophecies and inspired Scripture reading.

- \* Personal experience.

- God orders the circumstances of life so that His people can learn from their experiences.
    - We learn from our failures as well as successes.

## 2. General direction of our lives.

- a) God makes His will known to us as we reflect on the fundamental life decisions and long-range commitments that we have made.

- \* For example, God is unlikely to want a married man to leave his family for a year to evangelize in another land. Such a man has more basic responsibilities for the life of his family.

- b) Much of God's guidance is hidden in the Christian's general life direction. We need to reflect on our life to receive this direction.

## 3. Specific direction.

- a) Specific direction is given either directly to a person (immediate) or through the mediation of another Christian (mediated).

- b) People most often experience God's *immediate* specific guidance in two ways: leadings of the Spirit and signs.

- \* A leading of the Spirit is a person's internal sense that God wants him to perform a certain action or speak certain words.

- Because leadings are subjective experiences, one can be misled by personal desires, an over-scrupulous conscience, or even an evil spirit.
    - However, the possibility of error should not prevent one from following leadings. Be willing to risk mistakes. Such a willingness allows the beginning of growth in sensitivity to the Spirit.

- \* Signs.

- "Praying for a passage." This is asking the Lord to indicate His will through a passage in Scripture selected at random. This can be helpful but is not

conclusive.

- Circumstances in life. These form an accurate indicator of God's will only sometimes. Even Satan can form circumstances.
- "Laying a Fleece" (Jgs 6:36-40). This is to ask God to arrange circumstances in a particular and extraordinary way through supernatural intervention to show us that He wants us to take a certain course. This is the least desirable of all ways of seeking a sign. Some people often lay a fleece because they are unwilling to accept guidance God has already given.

- \* A constant reliance on signs can be dangerous. People can use signs as a substitute for listening to God, or to avoid making difficult decisions. Also, Christians can interpret Scripture passages and circumstances in many different ways according to their personal preferences.

c) God not only speaks immediately to individual Christians about specific decisions, but He also speaks in a voice *mediated* through the body of Christ.

- \* God often uses others to guide individual Christians.
  - Importance of Household Servants and other leaders in MFC. Prv 11:14.
- \* Christians should seek consultation in all major decisions.
  - Not required for us in MFC, but this is a major help to knowing God's will. Prv 12:15.
  - One's Household Servant in MFC, and also other more mature brethren, are special channels of God's love, care and guidance.

### **C. Growing in receiving guidance.**

1. No method of obtaining guidance from God is fool-proof.
2. A central truth concerning guidance: the Christian's trust is in God, not in methods. We grow in receiving guidance by growing in a loving relationship with God.
  - a) Thus our first step toward hearing God speak more often and more fully is to enter into a deeper personal communion with Him.
  - b) We need to surrender our life into God's hands. The essence of this surrender is the desire to know and do God's will.
    - \* Whenever confronting a significant decision, we should ask ourselves: "What does God want me to do? How can I most please the Lord?"
    - \* Man's surrender enables God to reveal His purposes without constantly struggling against stubborn human will.
    - \* We should decide to obey God's will before God reveals it.
      - We can joyfully submit to God because His plan for us is the best.
      - We can hear God's voice and discern His will more easily and clearly if we surrender without qualifications.
    - \* We can deepen our surrender to God by offering our life to Him each day.



#### **D. Practical steps to receiving guidance.**

1. Prayer.
  - a) Pray specifically for God's guidance.
  - b) Pray for special areas needing direction, as well as for general wisdom in daily decisions. Jas 1:5.
2. Study and meditation.
  - a) Read the Bible every day and provide some times for more specific study.
  - b) Read spiritual books on a regular basis.
  - c) Meditate on your personal experiences during the day or week. Sir 6:37.
3. Faithfulness to our life as MFC.
  - a) Many resources for receiving guidance exist within MFC.
    - \* Direct guidance from MFC leaders.
    - \* Encouragement from our brethren.
    - \* Instruction through our many teachings and formation programs.
4. Trust in God.
  - a) God will always make His will known to us if that is what our hearts desire.
  - b) Reject the false humility that makes us think God would not stoop to speak to us directly, given our sinfulness, or given our inadequate mental capacities. Such a posture denies God's love and power.

#### **E. Conclusion.**

1. God loves us and wants to know His will for our lives.
2. Growth in receiving guidance is a process, thus requiring patience. We grow in receiving guidance as we grow in our personal relationship with God.
3. God's will is for all of us to have the mind of Christ so completely that we would know and obey the Father's will instinctively. If we cooperate with God, this will happen.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

### TALK No. 5 : OVERCOMING THE WORLD

#### Expanded Outline

#### **A. Introduction.**

1. Many people today, including Christians, are in bondage. To depression, loneliness, anger, frustration. To sex, alcohol, drugs. To fears.
2. The sources of problems are four-fold: the world, our flesh, the devil, and our personal wrongdoing.
3. The next four talks will cover each of these.

#### **B. The problem: the world.**

1. What is “the world”?
  - a) 1 Jn 2:15, 5:19. These are puzzling passages. Is the whole world evil?
  - b) “World” does not refer to the physical universe.
    - \* The world is not inherently evil. In fact, God approves of all that He has created. Gn 1:31; 1 Tm 4:4a.
  - c) “World” does not refer to “all men.”
    - \* Sometimes this is the sense of John’s use of the word. As in Jn 3:16. Here God loves the world, and so we also ought to.
  - d) The “world” mentioned in 1 John is a system of relationships, ideas and values opposed to the kingdom of God.
    - \* This “world” is the Christian’s enemy. It is society and culture separated from God and locked into patterns controlled by the forces of darkness.
2. Areas of this worldly system.
  - a) Personal relationships.
    - \* Warped by competition, mistrust, resentment, manipulation.
    - \* Relationships between men and women, based on fleeting emotional attachments, are poisoned by suspicion, fear and exploitation.
    - \* Authority relationships in families, jobs and governments are bent by rebellion and the will to dominate.
  - b) Worldly ideas.
    - \* Some popular philosophical, psychological and artistic theories such as existentialism and humanistic psychology view man as a completely independent

unit, sovereign in himself, with no goals other than self-realization and the exercise of freedom.

- \* Scientific theories such as behaviorism tend to view man as a machine to be programmed and redesigned for greater efficiency.
- \* Many contemporary thinkers dismiss objective truth. To them, truth is subjective and relative: truth is different for different people in different circumstances.

c) Worldly values.

- \* Materialism (money and possessions), hedonism (pleasure), thirst for power and prestige (domination).
- \* Corrupt forms of independence and competitiveness.

3. Where is “the world”?

a) The world and the kingdom of God exist side by side in the same physical environment.

b) Thus we must be able to discern the presence of worldly relationships, ideas and values in our day-to-day lives.

- \* At times it will be clear. We need little discernment to tell that murder, civil war, gross violation of human rights, etc., are wrong.
- \* However, the world’s opposition to God often operates more subtly. For example:
  - the modern industrial corporation provides jobs and supplies goods and services, yet its lord is profit and the dominant values in corporate worker’s lives tend to be ambition and competitiveness.
  - the modern secular university expands man’s knowledge and helps solve man’s problems, yet its efforts are usually based on the fallacious assumption that man holds his fate in his own hands.
  - thus the influence of the world often eludes easy detection.
- \* To discern, ask: “Is Jesus honored here? Is Jesus the Lord here? Do people in this environment openly proclaim and acknowledge him?”
  - However, we should be careful not to use this test to make judgments about situations. We merely want to discern patterns of relationships, ideas and values which are non-Christian in origin and which may cause problems in our personal lives.

c) Effect of the world on Christians.

- \* No one can grow up today and remain uninfluenced by the world. Environments mold people.
- \* We pick up from the world many values, ideas and ways of relating which come from non-Christian sources and which hinder our growth in the Christian life.
- \* Only a truly Christian environment can reshape our worldly patterns of relating, thinking and valuing.

**C. The solution: Christian community.**

1. What is it?

- a) A Christian community, such as ours in MFC, is a group of people who openly proclaim the lordship of Jesus and declare their love for God by sharing their lives with other Christians.
- b) Members of a Christian community gather together in order to live an explicitly Christian life operating by the patterns of relationships, values and ideas of the kingdom of God.
  - \* Not just a series of Christian activities.
  - \* But central is a firm commitment of love between each member of the body. Thus our covenant in MFC.
  - \* Many Christian groups today are not Christian communities. Thus they do not provide an adequate antidote to the world.
- c) The Christian community is God's family.

2. Means of personal growth in MFC.

- a) Teaching.
  - \* Our various courses (CLS, CR, MER, ET, SpG, FCL, CE, CPR, FHS, LPG, etc.)
  - \* An environment in which members can observe, learn and practice the new ways of thinking and relating. This gives life to teachings.
  - \* Teaching reinforces community life, and community life reinforces teaching. The learning process thus combines both formal instruction and personal experience.
- b) Personal relationships.
  - \* Receiving God's love through other Christians is one of the most effective means of healing and change in the Christian life.
- c) Pastoral guidance.
  - \* We have the help of our household leaders, seniors (elders) and other mature brothers and sisters.

**D. Christian community: the light of the world.**

- 1. In MFC we can become free from bondage to the world. But MFC has another purpose, ultimately more central to God's plan of salvation.
  - a) Jn 17:15-16. Jesus wants us to be in the world still, though not of the world.
  - b) MFC has two purposes: to free men from their bondage to the world, and also to be a source of life for the world.
    - \* Jn 17:18. As God sent Jesus, so too we are sent.
    - \* Mt 5:14. We are to be a light to the world.

2. Thus a Christian community does not stand isolated from the world, but instead stands in the world as a visible, tangible witness to the love of God.
  - a) Expressed in love and unity among our members, in service to others, and in our work of evangelization and renewal.
  - b) We in MFC are to love the world but combat its ways. We are to help liberate men from worldly bondage but call on them to return to serve in the world.

**E. Conclusion.**

1. If you want to become a new person, commit yourself to our Christian community, to your covenant, to the life and mission of MFC. Make these your priority.
2. Jesus wants to free us from bondages. We can grow in a new life in the Spirit. MFC is our help and God's gift to us.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

### TALK No. 6 : OVERCOMING THE FLESH

#### Expanded Outline

#### **A. Introduction.**

1. As we grow in the Christian life, we will encounter personal problems.
2. The sources of personal problems are the world, the flesh and the devil. The last talk was on “Overcoming the world.” Now we will take a look at the flesh.
3. The world and the devil are external forces. As we recognize their work and get set to do battle with them, we find something wrong: there is another enemy force lurking within us. This is the enemy within—the flesh.

#### **B. What is “the flesh”?**

1. “The flesh” is not:
  - a) The body.
    - \* The body can be good or evil, depending upon how and for what purposes man uses it. The “flesh” is always bad.
  - b) The emotions.
    - \* Emotions are God-given, to act as our servants.
  - c) Sexual desire.
    - \* This is the most common modern understanding of the term.
2. “The flesh” refers to human nature separated from God, functioning apart from Him and thus acting in opposition to Him. It is the sum total of man’s tendencies and desires which run contrary to God’s law.
  - a) This conflict between God and the flesh clouds every sphere of human activity.
  - b) The works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21) include sexual, social and spiritual sins.
3. The flesh is a clear obstacle to growth in the Christian life.

#### **C. Reordering behavior.**

1. In Romans 7 and 8, Paul discusses two alternative methods for ordering desires and behavior so man can please God.

2. The first method is the law approach.
  - a) One hears God's word, attempts to understand God's desires for human conduct, decides to obey, and then exerts all his will power to fulfill God's laws.
    - \* This does not work very well. It usually causes frustration.
  - b) Paul experienced this. Rom 7:14-15.
    - \* It is impossible to attain righteousness through human effort.
    - \* Why does this happen? Rom 7:17-19.
    - \* The presence of the flesh-corrupted human nature makes significant human self-improvement impossible.
  - c) What is needed is a transformation in our nature, a transformation beyond the power of man.
3. The second method of pleasing God is to rely upon the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.
  - a) This is made possible in Jesus. This is the approach of the new covenant in Jesus. Rom 8:3-4.
  - b) Man needs more than a set of rules to live by. Man needs a transformation of his nature, a new birth and a new sustaining power.
  - c) To overcome the flesh, we must constantly yield to the Holy Spirit.

#### **D. The solution: yielding to the Holy Spirit.**

1. Decide to let Jesus be the Lord of every area of our life.
  - a) Not a teeth-gritting effort, but surrender.
    - \* Give God permission to completely change our life.
    - \* Cooperate and allow the Spirit to make the needed changes.
  - b) Characterized by an active desire to obey, not by grudging acceptance of the truth.
    - \* We must *want* to be changed.
    - \* Unless we actively desire freedom from depression, resentment, self-pity, etc., Jesus cannot intervene to make the needed change. He does not override our will.
2. Have faith that transformation will indeed occur.
  - a) Expectant faith! Rom 8:31-32.
  - b) Don't be resigned, don't despair, don't just live with the problem.
    - \* It may take time and effort, and may even involve a fierce struggle.

3. Maintain an attitude of thankfulness and rejoicing in the midst of personal problems.

a) 1 Thes 5:16-18. All circumstances!

- \* Because we trust God and know that He can bring good out of the bleakest circumstances.
- \* This attitude both expresses and inspires faith, and faith opens the door to the changing power of God.

b) Rejoicing is an action and attitude we can pursue regardless of our emotional state.

- \* We need not be captive to the flesh with its negative emotions.
- \* As the attitude of rejoicing becomes habitual, it pervades our entire life. We will come to live a stable life in true Christian joy.

c) A word on accepting “crosses.”

- \* For some, accepting crosses is a means God uses to purify and strengthen them.
- \* This view can be helpful, as long as:
  - one understands that God is not the author of evil.
  - the approach is not used to disguise an unwillingness to let the Lord change a problem area.
  - the approach is not used to hide a lack of faith that the Lord will work.
- \* God sometimes permits problems to linger in order to accomplish important ends, but His final intention is that Christians be healthy and whole.
- \* We should not think that a problem is good or that it will never be taken away. Rather, seeing a problem as a cross should build endurance and patience.

4. Do not passively accept problems, but instead actively declare Jesus’ victory over the flesh. Exercise God’s authority.

a) We are simply applying the Good News to our lives: Jesus has overcome the flesh through his death and resurrection; the Holy Spirit dwells in us and gives us the power to live free from sin.

b) A personal declaration of independence from sin both expresses and inspires faith. In turn, greater faith leads to a greater working of God.

5. Set aside all resentments.

a) Many people live for years with chronic hostility, stored grudges, and masses of unresolved and unsatisfying relationships.

b) Bitterness towards others is both a grave offense against love, and also a source of problems seemingly unrelated to the bitterness.

c) The Bible constantly admonishes us to forgive and forbear.

- \* Eph 4:31-32. The key: look to what Jesus did.



- d) Do this: write the names of people closest to you; beside the names, write your resentments; pray and surrender these to the Lord; ask Jesus to remove all bitterness and malice. Repeat as necessary.
- 6. Be part of a committed Christian community. For us this is MFC.
  - a) Many problems need more than just one's faith or determination. They need God's healing.
  - b) MFC is an important source of this healing.
    - \* Through healthy, loving relationships.
    - \* Through help in understanding one's problems.
    - \* Through the corporate prayer of God's people.

#### **E. Conclusion.**

- 1. We can overcome the flesh, as we live more and more God's life in us.
- 2. God has given us MFC to be a strong support in our growth.
- 3. God has started a good work in us and will complete it. 1 Thes 5:23-24.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

### TALK No. 7 : OVERCOMING THE WORK OF EVIL SPIRITS

#### Expanded Outline

##### **A. Introduction.**

1. We have seen 2 major sources of personal wrongdoing: the world (our social and cultural environment whose trends, values and ideas are opposed to God), and the flesh (self-sufficient human nature which operates independently of God).
2. We are not only a psychological, social and cultural being. We are also spiritual creatures. We need to confront a third source of personal problems: Satan and evil spirits.

##### **B. The reality of Satan**

1. The modern world dismisses the notion of a personal evil force as fantasy. Even some Christians share this view.
2. This modern disbelief in demons is largely attributable to the increasing secularization of society. Our culture has tried to reduce all of life to natural cause and effect, the interplay of atoms, the reactions of chemicals.
3. Yet Scripture, tradition and personal experience all testify to the presence of a personal evil force opposing God.
  - a) 1 Jn 5:19b. Rev 12:7-9.
  - b) Satan wields tremendous power. He was the great angel Lucifer. He rebelled against God and was thrown out of heaven. As a fallen angel, he still has power.
  - c) Satan opposes God everywhere and fights Him with all the weapons he can find. Satan's ultimate goal is to destroy the kingdom of God.
4. This spiritual war rages in world events. Satan is the "prince of this world."
  - a) Satan is implicated in political events, in international crises, and in the causes of human suffering: war, racism, famine, crime, poverty, disease, abortion.
  - b) Satan also works more subtly to undermine the social order, often using well intentioned individuals and popular movements for his destructive purposes.
    - \* Freemasonry
    - \* New Age
    - \* Reproductive rights for women
  - c) Satan's schemes affect even the body of Christ, causing division and spreading

weakness.

- d) Satan also works in the lives of individuals.
  - \* He tries to distort man as a creature created in God's image.
  - \* He subjects men to emotional, physical, mental and spiritual bondage.

### **C. Obvious areas of Satan's work.**

1. The occult.
  - a) Satanism, witchcraft, spiritualism, divination.
  - b) Do: renounce it, destroy any objects associated with its practice and be prayed with for freedom from its effects.
2. The bizarre.
  - a) Uncanny and inexplicable happenings which involve changes in our normal sensory perception.
    - \* An eerie sense of the presence of someone or something.
    - \* An unusual perception change in sight, sound or smell.
    - \* A hallucination-like experience, sometimes involving temporary loss of sight, hearing or smell, or a new intensity of sensory perception that alters or mixes together colors, sounds or smells.
  - b) Such can be induced by drugs, alcohol, fatigue and illness. If these are not the cause, then these may be the work of evil spirits.
3. Irrational feelings.
  - a) Satan lies at the root of many crippling, persistent, neurotic fears that have no rational basis: fears of people, high places, dogs, death, etc.
  - b) Satan also causes sudden irrational impulses: to drive a car off the road, to leap from a tall building, to commit a homicidal or suicidal act.
  - c) Such may have complex psychological causes. But very often are caused by evil spirits.

### **D. Hidden areas of Satan's work.**

1. Temptations.
  - a) Not just to sin, but to become anxious, frustrated, doubting, depressed, fearful, condemned.
  - b) Satan is "the accuser of our brethren" (Rev 12:10) and "the father of lies" (Jn 8:44). He

is often behind unfounded guilt feelings, self-condemnation, and false or evil thoughts about God, oneself and others.

2. Addiction.

- a) Gal 4:8. Such spirits are often strongly implicated in addictions to alcohol, drugs, compulsive eating, homosexuality, masturbation, etc.
- b) We need to consider also many natural and psychological factors behind addictions. But often Satan is at work.

3. Emotional problems.

- a) Depression, self-hatred, anger, etc.
- b) Satan often complicates psychological and emotional disorders.

4. Illness.

- a) Satan can hold people's bodies in bondage. Lk 11:14; 13:11.
- b) There is no fool-proof method for discerning when an illness is the direct work of an evil spirit.

5. Spiritual problems.

- a) Satan works to enslave Christians in their spiritual lives. Ways:
  - \* Incite overly rigorous self-denial or a severely legalistic approach to Christianity.
  - \* Foster self-condemnation disguised as humility.
  - \* Judge each other harshly.
  - \* Adopt an extremely self-righteous posture toward others.

6. Fear of God's work in our lives.

- a) Whenever God is beginning to work in power, Satan can be expected to try to obstruct the path.
- b) Some experience unnatural fears immediately prior to giving their lives to God, being baptized in the Spirit, or taking some significant step in their Christian lives.

**E. The Solution: the Armor of God. Eph 6:10-17.**

1. Truth.

- a) Satan is a liar and the father of lies. He tempts Christians by deceiving them about God, themselves, other men, and the external world.

- b) Sometimes Satan is able to make a Christian believe a lie by attaching it to a truth. "You shouldn't have yelled at your wife yesterday. You sure are a poor husband."
  - c) God's truth (our awareness of His love and protection) shatters Satan's lies.
- 2. Justice or righteousness.
  - a) We live righteously when we submit to the commandments of God. Sin is an invitation to Satan.
- 3. Faith.
  - a) The source of our authority over Satan is the power of God.
  - b) 1 Jn 4:4. We need not fear Satan.
- 4. God's word.
  - a) The Bible. Search the Scriptures and find out God's truth about an area under attack.
  - b) Authoritative preaching, teaching and prophecy.
  - c) A verbal command spoken directly to Satan or an evil spirit. Deliverance.

#### **F. Conclusion.**

1. Be aware of spiritual realities. Satan and evil spirits do exist, they operate in our personal lives.
2. Do not over-simplify or over-spiritualize the causes of personal problems by attributing every difficulty to Satan. To attribute everything to Satan can itself be his deception.
3. Do not be afraid. Satan has already been defeated. Lk 10:18. Respect Satan's power, but have the confidence of God's greater power.
4. Be faithful to your life in MFC. The body of Christ is a fortress against the onslaughts of Satan. To be outside its walls is to be dangerously vulnerable to enemy attack.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

### TALK No. 8 : REPAIRING WRONGDOING

#### Expanded Outline

##### **A. Introduction.**

1. We have seen that the world, the flesh and the devil are at the root of problems in every sphere of life (last 3 talks). The world, the flesh and the devil also cause wrongdoing in our lives.
2. We need to look at wrongdoing and see how to repair it. This is important because:
  - a) Wrongdoing is a particular form of sin. Thus it disrupts our relationships with God and others.
  - b) Wrongdoing is an important factor in personal relationships. It can result in ruined friendships, broken marriages, conflicts between parents and children, even the break-up of a whole Christian group.
  - c) Many Christians handle wrongdoing wrongly.
    - \* They avoid the person wronged.
    - \* They pretend it didn't happen, or hope others would not notice.
    - \* They try to be extra nice to compensate.
3. The above ways of handling wrongdoing do not repair the effects of the wrongdoing. At best these are covered up. Often the results are guilt, bitterness, etc. Thus we need an effective way to repair wrongdoing.

##### **B. What is wrongdoing?**

1. Wrongdoing refers to specific human actions and attitudes which disrupt a Christian's relationships with God and with others. It is sin in the realm of actions and attitudes.
  - a) For example, competitiveness, a value acquired from the world, is a personal difficulty a Christian must struggle to overcome. However, competitiveness can cause wrongdoing if an aggressively competitive Christian harms others and offends God.
2. Wrongdoing can be serious (murder, adultery, etc.) or minor (being always late, invasion of privacy, etc.). 1 Jn 5:17.
3. Wrongdoing always disrupts one's relationship with God, but it does not always disrupt his relationship with other people.
  - a) For example, a Christian who entertains a hostile thought against another commits a wrongdoing against God. However, he commits wrongdoing against the other person

only if he somehow expresses these thoughts through words or actions.

- b) Another example: a Christian's neglect of personal prayer is wrongdoing because it disrupts his relationship with God, but it disrupts other relationships only indirectly.
- 4. Wrongdoing is neither subjective (I think ...) nor relative (Most people think ...). It is based on God's objective standards of right and wrong.
- 5. Misconceptions about wrongdoing (these are not wrongdoing):
  - a) Temptations. These become sin only if we follow through. Even Jesus was tempted but did not sin.
  - b) Emotions. Difference between reaction and response.
  - c) Mistakes.
  - d) Actions which may displease others but which do not violate Christian standards of conduct.
- 6. If wrongdoing is left unresolved, its consequences in the Christian's life are serious and far-reaching.
  - a) Unresolved wrongdoing results in guilt, mistrust, suspicion, fear and lack of confidence.
  - b) Time alone will not repair the damage wrongdoing causes in relationships.

### **C. The solution: repentance and reconciliation.**

- 1. Since wrongdoing consists of actions performed by people who are responsible for their behavior, the simplest solution to the problem is for people to stop committing wrongful acts.
  - a) However, this is simple but hard to implement. We continue to struggle with the world, the flesh and the devil, and we are likely to commit wrongdoing from time to time.
  - b) What we need is a way of repairing wrongdoing. This is almost as important as preventing wrongdoing.
- 2. We repair wrongdoing through repentance and reconciliation.
  - a) Repentance is a conscious decision to change a pattern of thought or action which has caused wrongdoing.
    - \* Repentance also means the act of taking a new path away from further wrongdoing, deciding not to commit the sin again and then proceeding to live free from sin.

- b) Reconciliation is the process through which a person responsible for wrongdoing restores damaged relationships.
- c) Repentance and reconciliation are tools intended to help build and re-establish durable, loving, Christian relationships.

#### **D. Four basic attitudes.**

1. Eagerness to repent.
  - a) Repentance is a precious gift from God, a way to undo evil and to gain the freedom to live in righteousness. Christians should be eager to repent.
  - b) Repentance is not a confession of worthlessness or an act of self-humiliation. It is instead an opportunity to grow in humility, submission and love.
2. Sin is sin.
  - a) There are objective standards for right and wrong.
  - b) Our actions are not to be judged according to our intention or sincerity. We might have meant no harm, but if we did wrong, then we sinned.
3. Personal responsibility.
  - a) We must believe that we are personally responsible for our conduct.
    - \* Man is inventive in attributing wrongdoing to something other than oneself.
  - b) We often ask: “What forced me to do that? What can excuse me from responsibility?”  
Rather we need to ask: “Was my action wrong? Did I hurt someone? Was I wrong?”
4. God’s love.
  - a) We must possess an unqualified acceptance of God’s love.
    - \* Many people have difficulty with repentance because they see God as someone who punishes the slightest disobedience and withholds acceptance and approval from everyone who does not comply perfectly with his commands. They often hesitate to acknowledge wrongdoing because they fear God’s rejection.
    - \* Sometimes people are harassed by severe guilt feelings and self-condemnation.
  - b) We must realize that we do not have to be perfect to be worthy in God’s eyes.

#### **E. A procedure for repairing wrongdoing.**

There are four steps in the process of repentance and reconciliation. The first two (repentance)



are taken by the person who committed the wrongdoing. The next two (reconciliation) are taken by both parties.

1. Honesty. Admit the wrongdoing.

- a) We tend to look for factors that excuse us.
  - \* “My intentions were good.” “I didn't really mean it.”
  - \* “I’m not responsible.”
  - \* “He’s more to blame than I am.”
- b) But don’t be over-scrupulous. Temptations, feelings and mere mistakes are not wrongdoing.

2. Renunciation.

- a) Renounce the wrongdoing, decide to no longer indulge in it, and be sorry for having disobeyed the Lord and hurt another person.
- b) Renunciation should be accompanied by sorrow for the wrongdoing.
  - \* Not self-condemnation, but Godly sorrow. 2 Cor 7:8-11.
  - \* Self-condemnation is focused on self and leads to despair, self-hatred, self-pity. Godly sorrow is focused on the person injured and on the Lord, and leads to a deep resolution to repair the damage and avoid further wrongdoing.

3. Asking forgiveness.

- a) After one has repented, he must then be reconciled with the injured party. The first step is asking forgiveness.
- b) Formula: “I have done this (specify). It was wrong. Will you forgive me?” The reply should be: “I forgive you.”
  - \* This formal “ritual” of reconciliation allows the injured party to participate fully in the act of restoring the relationship.
  - \* The ordinary method of expressing regret for wrongdoing—an “I’m sorry” followed by “That’s OK” is inadequate to bring about reconciliation. Wrongdoing is not “OK.” One saying “I’m sorry” is not taking responsibility for his action.
  - \* Thus the formula must involve mutual acknowledgment of wrongdoing, the resolution to change, and the gift of forgiveness.
- c) Asking forgiveness is usually difficult. There is resistance born of pride, fear of humiliation or rejection, and guilt. We need to overcome this.
- d) We must also avoid scrupulosity in asking forgiveness. Sometimes we ask forgiveness unnecessarily. If we made a mistake but did nothing sinful, then we do not ask for forgiveness but rather just express an apology.

- e) We must give forgiveness as well as ask for it.
    - \* Why forgive? Because the Lord commands us to. It is not our option.
  - f) We should also go to sacramental confession.
4. Making up for wrongdoing. Restitution, penance.
- a) This is not an attempt to earn forgiveness, which is freely given. Rather, it is an outward sign that a person is sincere.
  - b) This should not just take the place of the other 3 steps. Conversely, the first 3 steps without restitution can be rendered ineffective.
  - c) How? If material loss, then repay. If damaged reputation, then go to people and restore the person's reputation. If cannot quantify, do special favors.

## **F. Conclusion.**

1. When repentance and reconciliation are practiced correctly, they yield both personal and communal peace.
2. Repentance and reconciliation heal memories; uproot guilt, mistrust and anxiety; and restore confidence.
3. Repentance and reconciliation will not only repair relationships but will also make us all closer than ever to one another.

## **FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING**

### **TALK No. 9 : THE CHRISTIAN AND MONEY**

#### **Expanded Outline**

##### **A. Introduction.**

1. We proclaim that Jesus is Lord. If so, Jesus ought to be in charge of our lives, of everything.
2. One difficult area to surrender: money and possessions. This area is often one of the last to go under Jesus' lordship.
3. People often apply worldly wisdom and come up with many excuses for continuing to run after the things of this world. For example:
  - \* My work is my prayer.
  - \* The bigger my business, the more employment I can provide.
  - \* I just want to earn enough so that I can work full-time without having to be paid.
4. The above are not by themselves wrong, but often disguise a more worldly motivation.

##### **B. Money or the Lord: who runs my life?**

1. Money (like sex, power, concern for reputation) is a strong candidate to rule our life.
2. If such were the case, then Jesus is not Lord. Mt 6:24.
3. However, it is easy to stereotype a man whose god is money. But how about the story of the rich young man? Mk 10:17-23.
  - \* He was a good man, was righteous, and in fact wanted to do more. But wealth still had the dominant influence. Therein lies the danger.
4. Paul was more emphatic. 1 Tm 6:9-10.
  - \* We are warned not to love money.
  - \* Such leads to other problems. Foolish and harmful desires. Can lead to anxiety, envy, loss of personal integrity (compromise).
  - \* Such will ultimately destroy us.
5. Jesus gave the right posture. Lk 12:15.
6. Jesus must rule over our money and over our desire for money.

##### **C. Scriptural teaching on money.**

1. God provides for His disciples.
  - a) Heb 13:5-6.

- \* Love for money is connected with anxiety.
  - \* Love for money comes from our fearful, insecure, fallen natures, in a fallen world.
  - \* For Christians, the situation is different.
    - We are reconciled with God, are under His protection, and are citizens of the age to come.
    - We are children of a Father who provides for all our needs.
- b) God will provide! Lk 12:22-31.
- \* Very explicit: stop worrying!
  - \* The unbelievers are the ones running after these things. Are you an unbeliever or a Christian?
- c) However, this does not mean we can be irresponsible in just depending on God. 2 Thes 3:6-12.
- \* If we do not work, then we should not eat or be fed. This is not to condemn those who are unemployed but are willing to work; what it condemns is idleness.
  - \* 1 Tm 5:8.
  - \* If we have faith, we will rely on God but also do our part.
  - \* We also need to work so that we can provide for others. Acts 20:35.
- d) The Lord will provide in various ways.
- \* He will help us find jobs or our livelihood.
  - \* He can provide promotions and pay raises when our pay is insufficient to meet our needs.
  - \* In MFC, we have brethren who can assist us.

But how much will God provide? Just enough for us not to starve? Or a bounty?

## 2. The ideal: sufficiency and abundance.

- a) 2 Cor 9:8. The ideal is enough for our own needs (sufficiency) and more than enough for help to others (abundance).
- b) Sufficiency for basic needs and responsibilities.
- \* Paul's definition of "enough": 1 Tm 6:7-9.
    - Enough for the necessities of life.
    - Will be different for people depending on their life situations; different people have different needs.
  - \* What about providing for the future? Our most basic provision is to have Jesus as Lord.
  - \* What about providing for our children? Inheritance?
    - What is important is to train our children to work, earn and support themselves.
    - Rich kids who have everything are not necessarily better off; often they are worse off.
    - The most important thing is for our children to truly know Jesus.
  - \* This does not mean that we should not have savings, insurance policies, etc. We

may have these, but our trust is in God and not on these things.

c) Abundance = more than sufficient.

- \* For helping others and the Lord's work ("good works").
- \* Abundance is not given to us so we can automatically raise our standard of living, but for good works.
  - Lk 12:16-21. Another rich man who had the blessing of a good harvest but acted in a wrong, selfish way.
- \* We can use abundance for:
  - almsgiving (in or out of MFC)
  - resource sharing.
  - promotion of God's work.

3. Our responsibility for financial giving.

a) Principle: every Christian is to support the body of Christians to whom they belong, where they receive their life support.

- \* This support is to be considered part of our basic expenses (like food, etc.).
- \* This support is our responsibility, and not to be looked on as an act of charity.

b) How? Basically through tithing.

- \* Tithing is by definition giving 10% of our income (gross after tax).
- \* This is a serious obligation. Mal 3:8. If we do not tithe, we rob God.

c) Contributions are used for the basic support of the life and mission of MFC.

4. The rich and the poor. 2 Cor 8:10.

a) All should give, whether rich or poor. 2 Cor 8:11-12.

- \* The rich should give more, because of their abundance.
  - Not just those who are very wealthy, but anyone who has means beyond one's needs to live. 1 Tm 6:8.
- \* The poor should give too. Mk 12:41-44 (widow's mite).

b) The principle of equality. 2 Cor 8:13-15.

- \* Some are afraid to be generous lest they themselves be in need later.
- \* This does not mean that everyone should dress the same, have the same type of vehicle, etc. What it does mean is that everyone's need is met.

c) We should exchange worldly wealth for eternal wealth.

- \* 1 Tm 6:17-19. Lk 12:32-34.

5. The rewards of giving.

a) Material well-being.

- \* Mal 3:7b-10. Prv 3:9-10. Lk 6:38.

- \* It's not that we give in order to receive. But we need to know that God cannot be outdone in generosity.
- b) Emotional well-being. Freedom from anxiety over money.
- c) Eternal well-being. Our riches are in the life to come.

**D. Conclusion.**

1. Jesus is Lord over our money. We are stewards.
2. Our generosity is important for the furtherance of the MFC vision and mission.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

### TALK No. 10 : HEADSHIP AND SUBMISSION

#### Expanded Outline

#### **A. Introduction.**

1. For most, if not all, groups of Christians that live a life together, there is a need for headship and submission (H&S)
  - \* Whether the nuclear family or the Christian community (MFC).
  - \* Necessary for God's purposes to be fulfilled.
2. Different types of H&S relationships (for us in MFC).
  - a) In the family -- husband/wife  
-- parents/children
  - b) In MFC -- Household Servant/member (for personal life)  
-- service head/member (for service)
  - c) Church/MFC (we are subordinate to the Church hierarchy).
3. In this talk, aside from general principles, we will look specifically at H&S in relation to husband/wife and in MFC.
  - \* More on husband/wife in MER.
  - \* More on MFC in LPG.

#### **B. Headship and submission in general.**

1. The nature of H&S.
  - a) Origin is the Godhead. Father-Son relationship is a H&S relationship.
  - b) It is not a question of personal worth or dignity (all are equal before God), but one of roles.
    - \* Jesus is submitted to the father, but is no less God.
  - c) It is not a question of human ability or gifts.
  - d) It is a matter of *mutual* deference. Eph 5:21.
  - e) Both H&S are not just functions but are ways of loving actively, looking to each other as true brothers and sisters in Christ.
  - f) It is necessary for order, unity and peace in any group of Christians.

## 2. Our resistance to H&S.

- a) It comes from:
  - \* a misunderstanding of its true nature.
  - \* a reaction to past structures that were abused.
  - \* not knowing how to do it in a good way.
  - \* a fear of others' reactions.
  - \* a false notion of humility.
  - \* an evasion of responsibility.
  - \* a rebelliousness in the world today.
- b) We often try to get by with informal leadership or simple administration.

## 3. What headship is.

- a) A gift of the Lord for the unity and good working of a group.
- b) A service. It entails hard work!
- c) Some functions:
  - \* To allow the group to function as one. The head keeps the group together and maintains order.
  - \* To guard the pattern of life. The head gives correction when necessary and sees that decisions are made.
  - \* To see that individuals are cared for and problems are dealt with.
  - \* To come before the Lord for the group.
- d) The head is not necessarily the person who makes all the decisions.
- e) The head is never the person who does all the work or takes all the responsibility.

## 4. What submission is.

- a) It entails an *active* working relationship. Not a passive posture.
- b) It involves:
  - \* obedience.
  - \* supporting the head.
  - \* being open to the head.
  - \* admonishing the head and disagreeing when necessary (done respectfully, without challenging his position as head).

## C. The husband/wife relationship (Eph 5:21-33).

1. H&S in Scripture is not just a cultural expression during Paul's time and no longer applicable in today's modern culture; rather it is an enduring Biblical principle.



- a) 1 Cor 11:3. H&S in marriage is connected with the enduring relationship within the Godhead.
  - b) Eph 5:22-25. H&S is connected with the enduring relationship of Christ and the Church.
2. The relationship involves, most basically, a mutual deference, being subject to one another. Eph 5:21.
3. Exercising headship.
- a) This is a God-given role and responsibility.
    - \* It is not ceded or relegated to the wife.
    - \* It is exercised actively.
  - b) It is a way of caring for, loving and providing for the needs of those placed under one's care.
  - c) It is self-sacrificial (Eph 5:25).
    - \* There is no room for tyranny or lording it over.
    - \* It involves giving direction, but has service at its heart.
4. Being submissive.
- a) Submit not because he is perfect, but because that is his God-given role.
    - \* We are all imperfect and should accept that this relationship of H&S is too.
    - \* Very seldom are great moral issues involved; usually it is a question of wanting to do things "my way." It is more of rebellion rather than being right.
    - \* Submission is in all areas. Eph 5:24.
    - \* Of course, the wife should speak up, give feedback, explain, discuss, even argue. But do these always in a good way.
  - b) Subtle difficulties in submission.
    - \* Submit only when you agree.
    - \* Intimidate him through subtle pressure.
      - Emotional blackmail. "I'll be hurt."
      - Withdrawal of affection.
    - \* "I'll pray about it." This often is an evasion. It often means "I don't know, let me plan my strategy."
    - \* Treating it as a concession, but with grumbling. "I'll submit, but you better not make a mistake."
  - c) One thing that helps is for the wife to know that her husband is himself under headship (to Christ, and concretely to his head in MFC).

- d) Submission should be liberating and joyful.

#### **D. Headship and submission in MFC.**

1. It is part of God's plan for Christian community. 1 Pt 5:2-5. Likewise, H&S is God's prescription for MFC.
  - a) For personal formation of every member (in households).
    - \* Our unique pastoral structure: cell groups.
    - \* Moses learned from Jethro. Ex 18:13-26.
    - \* In MFC, *all* are under headship. A protection for us.
  - b) For unity, good order and peace in the body.
    - \* H&S does away with the theory of everyone being responsible, in which case actually no one is responsible. This results in chaos.
    - \* It does away with power struggles and competition. It clarifies who is responsible.
  - c) For effective service as a body, in pursuit of the MFC mission and vision (in service assignments).
    - \* Many different services in MFC: Household/Unit/Chapter Servant, CLS team leader, service team head, course leaders, etc.
    - \* The leader does not dominate, nor do everything himself. Rather he allows others to serve effectively.
    - \* H&S brings proper deployment of the army that is MFC. Root meaning of the word "submission" is "proper order." Its origin is from nautical terminology about the proper deployment of a naval fleet for battle.
2. Exercising headship in MFC.
  - a) Though leaders are servants, headship involves real authority, as delegated by the Servant General.
  - b) Headship is meant to call forth responsibility, initiative and maturity in the subordinate.
  - c) There are always limits to headship. No one completely dominates another.
    - \* There is no such thing as blind obedience to a head in MFC.
  - d) Right headship always allows for "appeal."
    - \* To the head himself.
    - \* To the leader's leader if necessary and proper.
    - \* One can go all the way to the Servant General.
3. Being submissive.
  - a) There is no blind obedience or just a passive posture; thus we freely choose what to do or how to act. However, what is essential is the attitude (heart, spirit) of submission.

- \* a recognition of our leader's God-given role, despite his imperfection.
  - \* Not holding on to a rebellious or independent spirit.
- b) Submission involves some degree of obedience.
- \* This is part of being a Christian. Jesus himself learned obedience and was perfectly obedient (Heb 5:8).
  - \* We distinguish between "seeking headship" and "submitting an area."
    - Seeking headship: actively seeking input from one's head and taking that input as something more than just "advice."
    - Submitting an area: seeking headship with the understanding that it will be followed (obedience).
4. Given the above, there are four possible arrangements for being in submission to your head in MFC.
- a) Submission (obedience) only on the essentials of being in MFC. These "essentials" include:
- \* Attendance at meetings.
  - \* Living out the MFC covenant.
  - \* Following MFC policies and directions.
  - \* Prayer life and Bible reading.
  - \* Wrongdoing and major conflicts.
  - \* Overall relationships in and to MFC.
  - \* Service in MFC.
- b) Obedience on the essentials and actively seeking headship for other areas (e.g., outlook on business and career).
- \* Either you or your head can bring up an area for discussion.
- c) Obedience on the essentials, actively seeking headship, and submitting specific areas to headship.
- \* Purpose: for formation. E.g., overcoming a sin area.
- d) Completely submitting one's whole life to headship.
- \* Purpose: deeper ongoing character formation into the image and example of Jesus.
  - \* Wives and children have this relationship to the husband/father.
  - \* In MFC we normally will not enter into this fourth type of headship.

## **E. Conclusion.**

1. H&S is a personal relationship among brethren.
  - a) No legal procedure guarantees it will work right.
  - b) Head and subordinate must truly love one another as brethren. They need to honor and respect each other.

- c) The head must care for the subordinate; the subordinate must be submissive from the heart.
2. H&S is essential to the furtherance of our vision and mission in MFC.
- a) Worldwide evangelization and renewal can happen only if we move as one.
  - b) Like Jesus, who was perfectly submitted to the Father's will and plan, let us accept all He has for us, including H&S.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

### TALK No. 11 : FAITHFULNESS AND ORDER

#### Expanded Outline

#### **A. As Christians, we are to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. Gal 5:22. Three important qualities:**

1. Generosity.
  - a) A Christian is a person for others.
    - \* Meets the needs of others.
  - b) But we need wisdom for meaningful generosity.
    - \* Not just give to everyone who asks.
    - \* Not just accept all requests for service.
2. Faithfulness.
  - a) A Christian ought to be like a rock, one who can be counted on, one whose word is reliable.
  - b) A faithful servant. Mt 24:45-47. Mt 25:14ff.
  - c) Crucial for working together. We must be able to count on one another.
3. Peace.
  - a) "Peace" means "good order." 1 Cor 14:33.
  - b) Order is necessary not so that our lives are nailed down or regimented, but so we can answer for ourselves.
    - \* Not to inhibit spontaneity, but to have the peace to be freer.

#### **B. Daily Order.**

1. The modern world presents us with the problem of having infinite possibilities, with constant choice and decision.
  - a) People make no definite commitments. People have no roots.
    - \* Take life from day to day. Be "charismatic."
  - b) Result: a life led and controlled by circumstances.
  - c) For us, we have a definite direction and goal: we're on our way to heaven.

2. The solution: order our daily lives.

- a) Some situations are outside our control, and some are subject to our control.
  - \* We bring “accidents” into God’s plan through faith.
  - \* We bring those things under our control into God’s plan through faithfulness and order.
  - \* We should not focus on what we don’t know but on what we do know.
- b) Practically, we should make a list of priorities by areas.
  - \* Five major areas: family, MFC, Church, work, personal.
  - \* We should subdivide each area into 1st and 2nd priority. Perhaps, even a 3rd priority.
  - \* We should aim to know ahead of time if we can do something before committing ourselves to it.
- c) We should make a weekly and term-length (month, year) schedule.
  - \* Put in all the things we have to do regularly.
    - Note: already block out all MFC activities.
  - \* Have a weekly planning session for ourselves.
    - On a Saturday, plan for the rest of the coming week.
    - Review as needed and keep on track.

**C. Reordering our Lives (elements to consider).**

1. As we enter into a life in the Lord and in MFC, we need to make changes in our lives.

- a) Growth in the Lord = complete change-over, overhaul.
- b) We need to reorder priorities and put more order in our daily schedule.
  - \* So we reflect the Lord’s priorities.
  - \* So we can be in a better position to serve the Lord.

2. Principles.

- a) The Lord is our first and highest priority.
  - \* First and greatest commandment.
  - \* We must be ready to give up everything for Him. Mt 13:44.
- b) We need to trust in God.
  - \* Anxiety is a real enemy to a committed life. Mt 6:25-33.
  - \* God is a loving Father who has our best interests at heart.
- c) We need to strike the right balance among our many important activities.
  - \* Not over-emphasize one to the detriment of another.
  - \* Often we don’t have as much time for everything as we would want. Thus, there is need for prioritization.

#### **D. MFC is a high priority for us.**

1. We entered freely into a solemn covenant with God. We ought to take it seriously because God takes it seriously.
2. MFC can be our primary help in becoming the persons God intends us to be.
  - a) A way for the Lord to be first in our lives.
  - b) A way for us to grow in holiness and righteousness and the fruit of the Spirit.
  - c) A way to learn about the other priorities (4 other major areas) from the Christian perspective.
    - \* Not according to the desires of our flesh or the wisdom of the world.
    - \* MFC is a strong support environment.
  - d) A way of caring for the family.
    - \* MFC is a family renewal ministry.
    - \* MFC has various sections for our children.
  - e) A way of serving the Church.
    - \* MFC is a servant to the Church and is committed to its renewal and strengthening.
    - \* Our members perform many services in the parishes.
3. We should build our personal and family lives around our life in MFC. Block out all MFC schedules.

#### **E. Aspects of faithfulness and order in MFC.**

1. Attendance at meetings.
  - a) A part of our covenant.
  - b) Very necessary if we are to move on.
    - \* Fraternal care and support.
    - \* Formation courses.
    - \* The Lord speaks through sharings, prophecies, exhortations, etc., during our meetings.
      - Don't miss the Lord's special word for you.
  - c) Don't just excuse yourself on your own from meetings.
    - \* Inform your head/leader if you cannot come.
    - \* Don't say "I'm old enough to decide." This is true but:
      - Most of us are still young in the Lord. Informing the head will afford an opportunity to learn more about priorities in the Lord.

- We don't lead individual lives but are part of a body. The decisions of one will affect the others.
- d) Don't allow the blessings in your life to become the obstacles.
- \* Children.
    - Let go and let God.
  - \* Work / Career / Business.
    - Prv 10:22.
  - \* When we honor God by our right priorities, He will bless us.
- e) Pray that the Lord will protect your MFC schedule.
- f) Faithfulness and order includes punctuality.
- \* Shows our respect for God. We should not be late for the time of worship which precedes every meeting.
  - \* Shows our respect for our brethren.
    - We do not keep them waiting.
    - We do not waste their time.
    - We afford some time for fellowship before the meeting starts.
  - \* A practical tip: have "arrival" and "starting" times.
- g) Acceptable nights out in MFC:
- \* Most would experience Church meetings to be monthly or bi-weekly.
  - \* Meetings in MFC, due to the intensity of life together, are necessarily more often.
    - For members -- weekly.
    - For leaders -- more than once a week (you belong to a group but you also handle a group).
    - For other leaders and seniors (elders) -- more than once a week (you belong to a group, you handle a group, and you do further service such as giving a talk in a CLS).

Note: the frequency of commitments also depends on the availability of the individual. Thus, full-time workers, people with their own businesses, retirees, etc. can go out more often. However, the principle of a balanced family life is an important consideration (cf E.2.c). Household Servants should help their members achieve proper balance in their involvement in the community.

## 2. Service.

- a) There is a place in MFC for all levels of involvement.
- \* At the lowest level, one could just be a member and not have a specific service.
  - \* However, our unique pastoral structure (one leader for every five or so household members) necessitates the raising up of many leaders to lead households.
    - At any one time, about 15-20% of the body are leaders.
    - Thus, part of the vision for being an MFC member is to think in terms of serving as leaders at some time.



- Leaders move up the “pastoral ladder,” i.e., HSs become USs, USs become CSs, and so on.
- b) How do we handle requests for service?
- \* Be open. But also consider your other priorities and limitations.
  - \* Be creative and flexible when doing service.
    - Overall leaders do not have to be at all events all the time. Members should not expect them to be.
    - You can pop in on an activity and then leave, if your continued presence is not required.
    - For couples, it is not necessary to always be there as a couple.
- c) We stress service, but we should not neglect our family.
- \* 1 Tm 5:8.
  - \* A well-ordered family life allows us to serve. 1 Tm 3:45.
3. Other considerations.
- a) It often is necessary to cut back on some fronts.
- \* We sometimes cut back on good things (golf, socials), in order to make room for better things.
- b) Get free of things running you.
- \* Addiction to work, recreation, TV, Internet, etc.
- c) You may lose old friends.
- \* Try to bring them to MFC. This is the way to keep the relationship going.
- d) Seek out your leaders for inputs.
- \* Greater wisdom and experience is available.
  - \* Have humility in seeking guidance.

## **F. Conclusion.**

1. We need order so that our life would be at peace, so that we do not neglect all the important elements of our life, and so that we can serve the Lord.
2. Let us be faithful to God’s call to us and to our covenant in MFC.

## **FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING**

### **TALK No. 12 : UNITY IN CHRIST**

#### **Expanded Outline**

##### **A. Introduction.**

1. A fundamental characteristic of the Christian life is unity.
  - a) Paul emphasized this as he wrote to the different Christian communities. Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:27; Eph 4:3-6.
  - b) Christians are to understand themselves as members of the one body of Christ.
    - \* They are sons and daughters of the same Father.
    - \* They acknowledge the one Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
    - \* They live a life in the power of the same Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus saw unity among disciples and believers as so important that his final prayer was for unity. Jn 17:11,21
3. There are three aspects of unity: unity with God, unity with one another, and unity for mission.

##### **B. United with Christ.**

1. The most basic unity is our unity with God. Jesus' prayer was that "they may be one in us" (Jn 17:21), a unity so intimate and profound that Jesus himself is living in us (Jn 17:23).
2. This happens as we:
  - a) Turn away from our old selves and are renewed through the power of Christ's resurrection. Rom 6:5-6.
  - b) Follow and imitate Jesus. 1 Jn 2:5-6.

##### **C. United to each other.**

1. We are children of the same Father. We are thus brothers and sisters to one another.
  - a) As members of the same body, we are to have the same mind, heart and ideals.
    - \* Cor 1:10. Col 2:2. Phil 2:2.
2. Unity among God's people is crucial.
  - a) If we are not united, we cannot stand and survive.
    - \* Mk 3:25; Lk 11:17.

- \* Especially for us in MFC, we can expect intense attacks by the evil one.
- b) If we are to be just like Jesus, we need to grow in maturity. Our unity and support for one another enables us to grow. Eph 4:15-16.
- 3. This unity is to be reflected in three areas:
  - a) In our marriage.
  - b) In our family.
  - c) In our community (MFC).

#### **D. United for mission.**

1. God builds us up in order that we may serve Him and be His co-workers in establishing His kingdom. We are to be united in order to do mission. Phil 1:27.
2. Further, we need to be united in order for mission work to be effective. Jn 17:21,23.
  - a) The unity in the body of Christ is a powerful witness of Christian love and acts as a magnet for others.
  - b) The unity in the body of Christ also enables God's co-workers to do a concerted and effective work of evangelization to the whole world.
3. What unity for mission entails.
  - a) We need to see ourselves as one team, one army. Unity of vision and purpose.
    - \* One united command under Jesus.
    - \* One aim: to win the world for Christ.
  - b) Avoid what leads to disunity:
    - \* Factionalism. 1 Cor 1:10-13.
      - Our fundamental loyalty is first to Jesus, next to MFC, and only thirdly to our respective leaders.
    - \* Rivalry. Phil 2:3-4.
      - We do not compete against each other. E.g., which chapter has the fastest growth, the most tithe, the best music ministry, etc.
    - \* Envy.
      - We do not envy another's success in pursuing our mission. Rather, what happens to one happens to the rest. Rom 12:15.
    - \* Dissension.
      - Importance of submission to leadership in MFC.
      - One may give inputs and suggestions, or even disagree, but these should be done with respect and a submissive spirit.

- Need to subordinate our preferences to unity and the overall good.
- c) Gal 5:19-21.
  - \* We are supposed to be led by the Spirit and not by the flesh.
  - \* If we will not inherit the kingdom of God, much less can we promote and strengthen it.
- d) Unity entails a sharing of resources.
  - \* Human resources (to do talks, to lead groups, etc.)
  - \* Finances. Move money throughout the country (or the world) according to the Lord's interests. For example:
    - Established provincial MFC groups can fund expansion into a new province.
    - MFC groups can make donations to set up a Renewal Center in a province not their own.
    - MFC groups in different areas in a country make contributions to the International Mission Fund (IMF) for mission worldwide.
  - \* Missionaries move to provinces or other countries.

#### **E. Conclusion.**

1. Jesus calls us to unity. With God, to one another, for mission.
2. As we become truly part of the one body of Christ, then MFC can be used by God to build His kingdom.

\* \* \*

(SG. Oct 7, 2019)