

Sharing God's transforming love



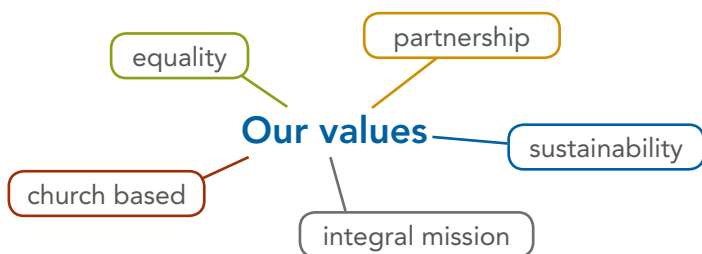
**Testimonies and sermons
from the Mission Council
2017 in Vienna**

additional material for Sunday of
World Mission

Sharing God's transforming love that people live in hope

Our mission

Partnering with local Baptist churches globally, we share Christ to bring justice, restoration and hope to our communities. We are committed to do so on a basis of equality through sharing and learning, giving and receiving.



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Remarks:

The Mission Council is the highest decision making conference of EBM INTERNATIONAL. In Vienna 2017 gathered 123 participants from 27 countries.

Impressum
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Dear friends,

Sharing God's transforming love that people live in hope!

This is the vision of EBM INTERNATIONAL and it is our conviction that the love of God can really change the life of people that they can make a difference in the world.

Our annual Mission Council is a mosaic of people and stories where this vision is reflected. During this year's council in the beautiful city of Vienna, with impressive hosts in an inspiring location, the "project:gemeinde Vienna", we captured some pieces of this mosaic.

12 people shared in very personal short talks from their experiences and connections with God's mission. Ten testimonies and one comprehensive workshop paper are captured in this booklet. Together with the three sermons preached by well-known scholars and missionaries out of our network we have an inspirational collection that connects you to our Mission and the theme of this year's conference: "Sharing and Learning, Giving and Receiving".

So we invite you to continue this movement of sharing in your local churches. Use the sermons to give your worship service a window into missions. Retell the testimonies to inspire others with the things God is doing through EBM INTERNATIONAL.

And if you want to be moved by a three minutes movie from the conference just follow this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZEUUpipokf0&feature=youtu.be>



Last but not least we need you to share your resources and finances with us, to pray for EBM INTERNATIONAL and to give thanks for what God is doing. May you experience that you and your church will also be learning and receiving in this reciprocal process.

God bless you! Yours,

CHRISTOPH HAUS

General Secretary EBM INTERNATIONAL

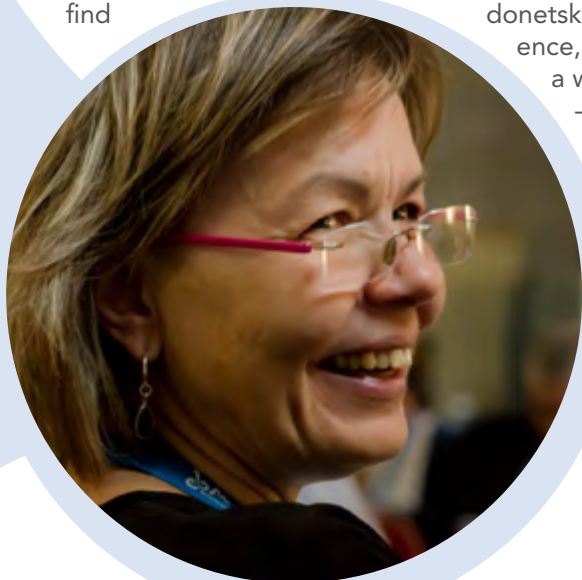
One remark:

Some English in this booklet is far from perfect. But all the speakers are not native English speakers and we left all the texts as they were written.

You have a lot of experience with regard to disaster and relief projects. Is 'sharing and learning – giving and receiving' as well applicable for disaster and relief projects?"

My name is Helle Liht and I come from Estonia which is a small Nordic country by the Baltic Sea. For the last 11 years I have been working for the European Baptist Federation (EBF) that brings together 61 Baptist Unions in Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East.

4 One of my roles in the EBF is to coordinate the response of our member bodies and mission and aid partners to any humanitarian crisis in our region. During the last few years our focus has been on the refugee situation growing out from the Middle East crisis, and the military conflict in East Ukraine. Both these crises have caused millions of people to leave their homes and find



refuge somewhere else in their own country or abroad.

Some time after the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine started, we visited East Ukraine with the EBF team to encourage our churches there and to find out how to best support them in this difficult situation. We flew to Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, and from there travelled by car to Severodonetsk in East Ukraine. That time it was about 20 km from the active conflict zone. The journey was 800 km, and on the way we saw bombed houses, destroyed bridges, rough roads and abandoned villages. It was spring but the air was full of destruction and demise.

Yet when we arrived in Severodonetsk for the pastors' conference, we were welcomed with a wonderful joyful greeting – CHRISTOS VOSKRES, VOISTENNO VOSKRES! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! It was such a difference between the atmosphere on the streets and

that of among God's people. We soon understood the reason: As the conference went on, we heard many stories of churches that had opened their hearts and doors to people who had to flee the war zone. The pastors explained that in the beginning there had been certain resistance to become involved in the aid and relief work because the churches thought that they have no time, no resources and no people as many were leaving. But as the crisis escalated and people were knocking on their doors, they realised that helping people in need is what God wants them to do. They understood that God wants them to reach out to suffering people and share his love with them.

One by one they described the hardships caused by the conflict, and how their churches were trying to respond. We heard many stories of churches opening soup kitchens, turning their meeting rooms into sleeping areas with bank beds and church members sharing their homes with the strangers.

And then they spoke of CHANGE that came over their churches as some of them for the first time reached out to the strangers and the refugees. One of the pastors said "Our theology has changed – we have be-

come an outward looking church." Another pastor said "When we take someone else's pain as our own, it changes us." And the municipality leader admitted with gratitude that the Baptist churches in the region make a great difference for the victims of the military conflict.

All pastors testified to the grace of God that is active, enables them to serve, and changes and encourages them through their service. As a result, people are coming to faith in Christ in that dark situation and many churches are growing.

5 As the EBF, we have helped the Ukrainian Baptist Union to build their capacity so that they can support their churches to respond to the need, access funding, and design and manage their relief projects. Our member bodies and mission and aid partners have also supported their work financially. This way we share their pain but even more their joy in what God is doing in Ukraine.

This is one story of how 'sharing and learning – giving and receiving' belong together when God's people serve in the name of the risen Christ.

HELLE LIHT

*Assistant General Secretary
European Baptist Federation*

When I speak here, I speak as a German, of course. Meanwhile, I cannot help it and I don't want to, I'm also here as a European. The last three years have changed me. The last three years have changed me as a pastor. The many refugees who have come to us, borders that have been closed again, people in Europe who have made themselves strong for exclusion, terrorist attacks and so on.

As a German bishop became pope in the year 2005, was the headline: "We are pope." All the Germans were pope at once. After the terrorist attacks in the last years the headlines changed – especially on Facebook. In the last three years I have been and I only name a few: Je suis Charlie, I'm Beirut, Je suis Paris, I'm Brussels, Ich bin München, I'm Berlin, I'm Nice and so on. All these titles with the cities of terrorist attacks (and the name Charlie) stand for deep connect-edness. All the many refugees, terrorism, people who have made themselves strong for exclusion,

Brexit ..., all this touched me.

A wise colleague of mine said at this time: "The more others want to exclude people and say: We can manage it on our own, we can do it alone, our country comes first, the more it needs people that say: God is for all of us."

I'm convinced that God entered the stage of the human world through the people of Israel, but his message on the stage is: God loves the whole world. We all know that.

Now to some questions?

What is my link to EBM INTERNATIONAL? What do I share with EBM INTERNATIONAL?

My answer is not innovative. But for me it's important:

I, as a pastor near Hamburg, and you – we share the same vision. Sharing God's transforming love that people live in hope! I cannot imagine a better vision. That is what I want to do in my life. That

is what I want to do in and with my church. I say it honestly today: "If Germany were the only testimony of how God works, I would often be desperate. If I had to read stories only of, how God is building his kingdom in Germany, I would often be desperate.

To see through you how God works in this world, gives me courage for my ministry. It touches me and makes me grateful. We hear these days, that it is nowhere easy

to serve God. But I believe we learn together: Even a broken "Hallelujah" is still a "Hallelujah".

For me, I can say: "Deep connect-edness is my headline for 2017." It goes beyond personal contacts. Do I have to give EBM INTERNATIONAL something? I don't know, you have to decide. I will enjoy in the meantime that we have the same vision.

Thank you for listening.

LEA HERBERT

Pastor in Großhansdorf/Germany



Praise the Lord God almighty!

I was born in a Christian family and God gave me wonderful wife and 2 children. My son who was three years old started attending Sunday school and he learnt a song which says that "I am happy today, in Jesus Christ I am happy today, He has taken all my sins away and that's why I am happy today". He would keep repeating that song and he wanted us to sing along with him. I never knew that it would be the last song of his life.

Life was going on smoothly, we were living in an apartment on fifth floor, my two children were playing outside, I was sipping a cup of coffee on a Saturday afternoon (26th November 2011). Suddenly I heard a loud voice calling out my name: "'Santhosh', 'Santhosh' something happened to your son", I came to know that my 3-year-old son had fallen off the 5th floor onto the ground. My heart was beating fast and I ran down the stairs hoping to save my son. When I reached ground floor the cleaners told me that they carried my son to the emergency room for treatment.

I ran there and I saw that they were trying to resuscitate my son but after few minutes later they told me that he is no more.

First word I uttered was that "God you gave me such a lovely son and now you have taken him back – all glory to God alone". I got another verse from the bible that says, "God will not test us beyond our capacity". So, after gathering lot of strength I told my wife that our son was no more. Our whole life was shattered, we were filled with grief. I told God that being a male I can handle the situation but I was surprised to realise that my daughter and my wife could also go through such a trauma. There were days when we both cling onto each other and cry for the loss. But we had to gather strength to handle our sweet daughter who was also missing her younger brother. We went through very much sorrowful days. But God gave us a hope that our son was very happy in Jesus lap and one day we will enter the heaven and see him and hug him as well.



Seeing us restored and standing strong in our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we have become the talk among the medical fraternity and the neighbourhood of Christian Medical Center (CMC) in Ludhiana. God has led us to pray for those who lost their beloved ones. God used us to show them Jesus.

I praise and thank God it has been six years since then, God has been faithful in fulfilling the promises and led my family through this situation with his mighty hand that we have grown stronger in faith and closer to Him than before. Here we are to testify His goodness.

DR. SANTHOSH
Medical Doctor of CMC Ludhiana

Is sharing and learning more than a dream?

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My dream is that we are ONE. No more US and THEM, BLACK and WHITE. No more IN and OUT. Open churches.

But we are still separated in this world. This is our reality.

Let me tell you a story, how we might overcome this: It was in Zwelithsa, a township in the Eastern Cape in South Africa. It was in the year 2009. Together with my boss and a missionary colleague, we facilitated HIV and AIDS prevention training in the community. There was stigma. People were talking about each other. Pointing fingers at each other. People were condemning others. Talking bad about THOSE having the virus. Bad talking without saying things straight into the face of others.

Then one pastor stood up. He was angry. And he was scared. One could see the pain in his face. Then he asked: "Have you ever seen a pastor who is HIV-positive?" And after some seconds of silence he added: "I am HIV-positive!"

Suddenly all the Stigma left the room. The bad talking was over and compassion entered the room.

This was a holy moment.

We have these moments here at the mission council: When a brother is sharing his suffering, we all suffer.

When the people from Argentina who remember me from my volunteer service 16 years ago show me their love.

When we ask each other how things are and listen to our stories for some minutes.

When former volunteers, young and old, tell me how much they love Africa.

And there are many more examples.
Beautiful stories from beautiful people.

Let us find these moments of ONENESS.

When there is no more US and THEM.

In CHRIST we are ONE. If one part suffers, the whole body suffers.

MATZE DICHRISTIN
Mission Secretary Africa Promotion of EBM INTERNATIONAL



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What can we learn from each other? An example for partnership in mission.

EBM INTERNATIONAL was founded in 1954 by Baptists from France, Switzerland and Germany. Maurice Farelly and his wife were the first missionaries. They were working in Ndiki were the people do remember them up to today. Later they went to the North of Cameroon to the city of Maroua to start church planting work there.

Since that time there are many different projects in Cameroon. There are medical centers, technical centers and bible schools in Maroua, Garoua and Mokong and we also have Theological Seminaries, hospitals and technical centers in Douala, Ndiki and Nkondjock. Besides the projects EBM INTERNATIONAL has invested a lot in bursaries of Cameroonians, especially young people.

I am currently responsible for the womens work of the Baptists in Cameroon within the UEBC (Union des Églises

Baptistes). In this responsibility I have visited a lot of projects who are working with women. I was able to attend conferences and meetings in the Technical Centers in Nkondjock, Maroua and Garoua to have fellowship with the young women who are learning a profession there.

Former missionaries in Cameroon like the Pusch families or the couple Turquais are still in contact with women they were working with during their time of service. The connection between EBM INTERNATIONAL and the UEBC is very strong. It is a partnership with mutual respect, where one appreciates the other and where we take decisions together. EBM INTERNATIONAL has been our first international partner and we need to be faithful in this partnership. Currently we are facing a massive threat by the terror of the Boko Haram sect in the far north of our country. We need divine intervention in this conflict and we need your prayer for this situation.

An African proverb says: "If you want to go fast, walk alone, if you want to go far, walk together".

This is a spirit that we need to apply in our personal lives and in the projects we are involved in: We need to count on God and trust in him and apply his word. This

is something where the church in Europe can learn from us and also from our pastors.

ANNIE MBONGO

Director of the women department of the UEBC





My name is Elizabeth Mvula, from the Baptist Convention of Malawi (BACOMA). My position is President for the Baptist Women in Malawi as well as the Vice President of the BACOMA and I am here as their acting General Secretary.

The Baptist Convention of Malawi is coming from a background where the Missionaries literary did everything for the people they ministered to, like building them

churches, giving them books, paying them for the work they were doing in the churches and a lot of other things. This cemented the culture of handouts and dependency.

Now most of the missionaries are no longer there as there has been some shift in the way missionary work is being done and how missionaries are working with various entities.

EBM INTERNATIONAL has been working with us for a number of years now trying to break this culture and reinforce a change of mind-set moving away from the total dependency syndrome. They have worked together in leadership and capacity building. I am standing here as a testimony of the fruits of this change in mind-set, not only about being independent but also working with what is available to enhance the work of God.

My being here as acting General Secretary is a true reflection of the effects of change in mind-set. A lot of efforts and work has been done by EBM INTERNATIONAL and also in collaboration with the Convention to take on this difficult task. Thank God that we can testify that EBM INTERNATIONAL came with

a different approach which looked rather difficult – but it is bearing fruit and many people are being empowered through these efforts. Our leadership consultant, Rev. Regina Claas, has been working tirelessly with the leadership of the convention empowering leaders at different levels to break this cycle. We can give so many stories of what impact this has been on the people, the various leaders and the convention as a whole.

My most sincere appreciation for letting me share this testimony with you and to God is the Honour and Glory.

ELIZABETH MVULA

Acting General Secretary of the BACOMA



44 years ago we started the partnership between EBM INTERNATIONAL and PIONEIRA (Baptist Union in Brazil). We are deeply grateful to them for investing with us in social work, missions, and theological training.

However, there were some unsettling questions growing bigger and bigger:

How would we be able to repay their big support?

What do we have to offer?

Slowly, an idea was ripening and we were able to start offering something, with the help of EBM.

We always encourage our churches to donate for EBM INTERNATIONAL projects. It's not much yet but the amount keeps growing.

We speak Portuguese – so would it be possible for us to invest into other Portuguese speaking countries?

Our Bible School in Brazil is an absolutely great school. Would it be possible to share expertise and experience?

That's how the partnership between PIONEIRA, EBM INTERNATIONAL, and the Baptists in Mozambique started. Everyone benefits from it:

We are able to pass on something from the big presents from the past;

It enables our students and church members to be engaged in world mission;

The teaching staff of our Bible School contributes to church workers being trained.

Bibles and textbooks in Portuguese are being spread.

We in PIONEIRA are so happy that our project has expanded: a group went to Peru for mission purposes taking a bus which took about 82 hours of traveling! We are also working on mutual projects with Argentina which is bringing us closer to each other.

That's how we function in the EBM INTERNATIONAL family: everyone helps everyone.

RUI TESKE

Consultant in Sao Paolo

President of the Pioneira (Baptist Union in Brazil)

„The beginning of the work in Latin America“

The mission work of MASA (Missionary Activities in South America) started in the year 1970 with children at risk and indigenous people after the German pastor Horst Borkowski visited South Brazil and North Argentina in 1969/1970. He did evangelistic campaigns in the countries. The established projects were growing fast in size and number and the work spread to Bolivia, Peru and Cuba within the next years.

In dealing with one another, we want to live the partnership, led primarily by spiritual rather than by institutional guidelines. From the beginning of the work in Latin America deem the following five aspects as very important. It is interesting how much they were already inline by that time with the current values of EBM INTERNATIONAL

Full equality in all areas and respect for our partners' being different on account of history and culture.

Being brothers and sisters in the Lord: trust in the sincerity of our partners and transparency in communication.

Candid language in case of misunderstandings or problems weighing on the fellowship.

Patient search for feasible solutions on both sides.

The Word of God, the Bible, and fellowship in prayer are the decisive guidelines in partnership-based mission.

What has changed since the beginning of the work is the number of projects and countries EBM INTERNATIONAL is now operating in the Region. We have learned a lot together and also from one another while the values and the principals of the work have remained the same. Two examples for this concept of "Sharing and Learning – Giving and Receiving"



are the church planting projects in Peru and Cuba. From the small number of church planters in those countries a massive network of churches has been founded in the past years. Under the leadership of Daniel Gonzalez in Cuba hundreds of church planters have been trained and congregations were established. In Peru, our missionary Adrian Campero has founded more than 60 churches within the communities of the Quechua. And the

plan is to plant another 50 churches within the next ten years. In 2017 the new Quechua bible school has been opened with the support of EBM INTERNATIONAL so that the people can be trained in their own context.

CARLOS WALDOW

Mission Secretary for Latin America Promotion



My name is Marlene Cevik and I live since twenty seven years in Turkey that is more than half of my life. I was born in Germany. There I also met my husband Mesut Ertan and 1989 we emigrated to Turkey to serve Jesus Christ.

During my time there I learned a lot: I learned that there is a lot of patience and empathy needed in the handling of interested and converted people. Even if the liberal Islam is big in Turkey, the Islamic

basic setting is still very big, this means they believe in Mohammed but don't fulfill what is written in the Koran. For example they are drinking alcohol, don't stick to the five prayers a day, don't fast in the fasting month Ramadan and don't give any alms and don't go to a pilgrimage to Mecca.

For me personally it is important to follow up on people who come to our church but to put no pressure on them. This applies before and

after their conversion. We advise the people who made a decision for Jesus to read the New Testament and offer a discipleship training course.

One of the first questions often is why I don't believe in Mohammed. Thereon we answer, that the Islam is a post-Christian religion, it evolved around 600 after Christ, and that we therefore cannot accept Mohammed as a prophet. If visitors then start to discuss and provoke us, we advise them to come back after reading the Bible and the Koran.

We are very thankful for all our brothers and sister who support us financially, with prayers and visits (especially French and Germans). Through the financial support we are able to keep our church alive and to distribute aid packages to Iranian, Syrian and especially poor Turkish refugees. Also the support through prayer we feel clearly when we succeed another time to come out of a bad situation or new people find to Jesus Christ.

Especially we are happy for visitors: It is very important for us, that people experience our work not just through prayer mails but also get an impression themselves. Some brothers and sisters sadly don't come

anymore because of the current situation, and that hurts us a lot because we live in Turkey. That's why we are even happier, as two French couples, and people without any knowledge find their way from the hotel to us. Also we were very happy over a group from South-Germany who visited us now for a long weekend. Thank you to all brothers and sisters, who can't travel anymore and faithfully support us in prayer.

Throughout the years we went through many difficult and dangerous times. Reasoned with his appearance on a Death-List from a Terrorist group my husband had six years police protection and until this day has right on it. Through times like this I learned to trust in the Lord. Many Christians think about leaving Turkey but I know that God wants me here.

Therefore my Experience: God can carry you through dangerous times. He protects those who are working for his mission. We as Christians shouldn't be afraid of the world. Let us trust him in everything.

MARLENE CEVIK

*Missionary of EBM INTERNATIONAL in Izmir/
Turkey*

God is happy when we are involved in making his plans happen. It's not that God would depend on us in any way. If necessary he'll make a donkey speak or ravens transport food. But when we make ourselves available to him God works through us. This deepens our relationship with him since we see firsthand how God is working.

My wife Christel and I want to make ourselves available to God. Even before we got engaged we talked about how it's so much easier to walk together when you're sharing the big goals in life. There will always be enough little construction sites to work on.

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Workwise, Christel would take care of sick people and I would repair cars. We also volunteered in our church in Schweningen. We had the impression it would help to understand the Bible better. So God was leading us to the Theological Seminary in Hamburg where I started my studies. Christel was able to go to lectures too while taking care of our two girls. During our time in Hamburg we established a contact with our mission organization EBM INTERNATIONAL. Early in 1997, in the meantime a family of five, we were sent out to Cameroon.

Mission work in Northern Cameroon started in 1954 when there were neither public schools in the countryside nor any medical care.

So the missionaries had to take care of the sick themselves. They built an appropriate primary care for the most common cases. The schools on the other hand had to train the future leaders. A central management took care of the bookkeeping.

Evangelism and diaconal work would go hand in hand. There were several developments during the time we lived in Northern Cameroon.

Firstly, the number of public institutions grew. In order for the schools and clinics of the mission to maintain themselves they had to keep developing and becoming more professional. Secondly, more and more responsibilities were given to local people. Both developments didn't always go smoothly. There were setbacks and disappointments.

The church convention we worked with has about 300 churches now in Northern Cameroon.

This number has grown faster than the number of pastors.

In addition to the pastors there are also so called evangelists that have gone to rather simple Bible Schools. Many have served faithfully for a small salary, com-

paring it to a "piece of soap". In the meantime more and more pastors are being trained and therefore churches have to pay more and more money for salaries. With rising salaries comes their growing influence in the church convention whereas until now it was dominated by churches in Southern Cameroon.

It was a privilege to see this change happening. We were able to learn a lot through this. We would discuss with people, help with practical problems, preach and teach the kids, train staff members, host guests, and have lots of visitors. God has been at work and he let us take part in it. We were able to experience how beautiful it is when people choose to walk with God. We've also seen what kind of damage happens when people are going for their selfish goals.

Now we had the impression we should go to a new place. God has brought us step by step from Cameroon to Regensburg into a completely different situation. But also here in Regensburg we want to stay available to God.

MARTIN PUSCH

*Pastor in Regensburg
EBM missionary in Cameroon
from 1997 to 2016*

23

“Sharing and learning – giving and receiving”

Jesus Washes His Disciples’ Feet – John 13, 1-17

¹ It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” ⁷ Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” ⁸ “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” ⁹ “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head

as well!” ¹⁰ Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. ¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. ¹³ “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is risen – indeed he is risen and he is here now in our midst!

He is here, when we are together as sisters and brothers – he is here in his word – he is here, when we listen, while we are remembering him, while we talk about him. He is here while we are eating and talking, while we are breaking bread and sharing wine (or juice) while we are sitting together, getting to know each other better and share our dreams and hopes, our fears and failures. He is here when we think about his word, about the people he loves, when we think about the ways we can reach people with his love, he is here, when we think about mission.

He is here while we are sharing and learning – giving and receiving!

So let us learn from him, how we can give and receive and what we have to share.

On an evening like this, during supper – the disciples were sitting or laying (or hanging) around the table – eating.

((At this point the preacher took a towel and a shuffle and „demonstrate“ what Jesus did.))

⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

With this story John is painting a picture right before our eyes: We see Jesus in the midst of his disciples, eating, drinking, talking to them. And than quite surprisingly he starts to wash his disciples’ feet. Jesus did a lot of different things, but very seldom a scene

is told in such a clear and precise way:

⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

You can see it – can you? – see the picture John is painting?

John wants us to remember Jesus in this way: Jesus on his knees before his disciples. (And he was successful in this: Very often this scene is painted, told in a poetic way, played in a passion play or preached about.)

And above all this – the headline: „He now showed them the full extent of his love!“ Jesus showed his love – washing the feet of his friends, companions, and disciples. Knowing one of them is going to betray him.

In doing this, he turns all structures of power upside down: The Lord is becoming like a slave, the king of all mankind is serving them. The structures we live in, in our world and our churches are often structures of power. Power that is used top down. Jesus turns it upside down: He uses his power bottom up. This shows the power of love. The power of love is practiced bottom up.

John emphasized the moment:

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;

⁴ so he got up from the meal

Jesus is aware, that all power has been given to him, and that he comes from God and will be returning to him. He is aware that he has all power and is put into the “highest position” – and now – in that moment he kneels down before his disciples – wow – what a love he shows!



Jesus does not use his power to reign over people. He uses his power to love! And the one who loves asks:

What do U need? What can I do for U? How can I serve U?

Jesus has at least two reasons to wash his disciples' feet:
First: Because they had dirty feet – it's good and healthy to wash dirty feet.

Second: To let the disciples have part with him so that they can belong to him. Through the washing of the feet the disciples can belong to Jesus. Jesus speaks about a very close relationship: belonging to each other! And only those who are willing to be served by Jesus are able to belong to him. Washing feet is also about forgiveness. And only those who are willing to receive forgiveness for their sins, who value what Jesus had done for them, can belong to him.

Giving and receiving – this is not easy for Peter:

⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” ⁷ Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” ⁸ “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” ⁹ “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!” ¹⁰ Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”

It is not easy for Peter to receive, to accept that Jesus is washing his feet and to accept, that the power of love comes bottom up. Seeing Jesus kneeling before him – sometimes it's hard to receive love. It's easier to be in the other position: to give generously top down. Washing feet is about forgiveness. To accept, what Jesus is doing here Peter had to look at his own condition as a sinner. The condition of all

human beings – of all of us: Sinners. We need the love and forgiveness from Jesus. We need our feet being washed by him. This is not always easy to take!

Sharing and learning – We shall do like Jesus did:

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. ¹³ “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

We shall do like Jesus did: Wash each other’s feet. This is our duty, if we want to belong to him. And if we do so we will belong to him and to each other: Serving one another. So we will serve each other and thus assuring each other in the forgiveness we all received. We serve each other with the gifts God has given us. And we serve all people with the good news, the gospel we received. And so we will belong to

Jesus, we will be a part of the body of Christ.

This is not a story about mission in first place, but I think we can learn from this word of God. We can learn something from that for our EBM-Community, EBM-family: How to serve one another.

First: Being on our knees, before each other and before our churches and communities. Being humble and ask: What do you need my brother, my sister? Having close and good communication. Listen to each other and that leads to:

Second: Try to understand each other. Look deeper. Don’t let culture hinder your love. We need forgiveness from God and we need to forgive each other. There can be so much pain and hurting because of cultural differences and misunderstandings. Let’s go on our knees and ask: Who is the other person, the other church, the other culture? Value the other culture – don’t be ethnocentric – be Christocentric! The power of love works bottom up!

Third: Forgive each other and don’t hesitate to say: You are forgiven,

you are loved, and you are like me, my brother, my sister. So we both belong to Christ and to each other. We need each other. When we started this church two pastors from South Africa, Kleppie and Thabiso helped us for three month. They gave their time, their passion, and their love. When we had serious problems and needed encouragement, one time Paul Mzisa was here, another time Daniel Gonzales. They encouraged us and we know all of them are still praying for us. We need each other. We belong to each other – we are the body of Christ.

Forth: Consider where money comes from. Upps – what? Consider Judas – he already decided to betray Jesus: for MONEY! Money is always an issue and it can hinder your relationship with Christ, and sometimes our mission. Consider where money comes from. Consider where the money we are working with comes from. Money: Big churches are built from small money. Churches are not built from big money from generous sponsors. The widow’s coin, a few cents from a teenager’s pocket money. This shows from what churches are built. The widows’ coin: small change means big love.

When I was a teenager I prayed about what to do with my money. The answer came as an EBM-newsletter and I started to give € 2,50. Five German Mark each month for the work with Toba Indians in Peru.

Think about this when you plan a project or have travel expenses. When you start to construct a church building or hire pastors and coworkers. The money we are working with comes mostly from Christians who serve on their knees, spending some time praying and asking God.

Fifth: Get on your knees and pray. You have seen the EBM-prayer calendar before. And you can take EBM-Prayer Requests each quarter of the year. Pray for each other. Serve each other with your prayers.

And may be there is more to take from this – find it out.

You will be blessed!

In the end Jesus says: Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

So we will be blessed – you will be blessed, if you are having this picture right before your eyes: Jesus kneeling before his disciples. We shall follow his example, adopt this attitude. Let us serve one another. This attitude is not a humiliation, no: there is a blessing waiting for us: Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Amen

ANDREA KLIMT

Professor at the Theological Baptist Seminary in Elstal/Germany

“Two way mission” sharing and learning, giving and receiving

It's a pleasure to be able to be here with you during these days. It's also a pleasure to be able to share the message this evening, however there is also a great fear.

I am Claiton André Kunz, pastor and professor, director of the Baptist Seminary (Faculdade Batista Pioneira), at South of Brasil, at Ijuí city. I am married with Marivete, also professor at Faculdade Batista Pioneira, and we have a daughter, called Hannah.

I am very grateful to EBM International, because during more of half of my life they have invested in my ministry: in the missionary field where I started my Christian life, in my studies at the Seminary, and now in my work as professor and director of this institution. Thank you very much for the support and the investment in my life and for the prayers for all of us. I also want to say thank you in the name of all

the students and professors at the Seminary. This year we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the institution, and practically during all these years you have been investing in this project.

“Two way mission” sharing and learning, giving and receiving

I would like to invite you to read the Gospel of John, chapter six, verse one to fifteen. I believe it is a text well known to all of us ...

¹ Sometime after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias),² and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick.³ Then Jesus went up on a mountain-side and sat down with his disciples.

⁴ The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

⁵ When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he

said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?”⁶ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

⁷ Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!”

⁸ Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up,⁹ “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”

¹⁰ Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there).¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

¹² When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.”¹³ So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

¹⁴ After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.”¹⁵ Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force,

withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

Very well. All right. What is the context of this passage? Where Jesus was when this happened? The Bible text here says:

¹ Sometime after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias),

Great part of Jesus life, especially of his ministry, happened around of the Galilee Sea. This sea has different Bible names:

- Sea of Galilee: because the name of the region;
- Sea of Tiberias: because the city of Tiberias, build in honor to Tiberius Caesar;
- Sea or Lake of Gennesaret: because the city of Gennesaret or Ginosar;
- Sea of Chinnereth: because of the format of the lake looks like a harp. In Hebrew the word “harp” means Kineret.

According to the Gospel of Luke, chapter nine, verse ten, the place by the shores of the Sea of Galilee where it happened was Bethsaida.

The Bible text tells us:

² and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick.

³ Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples.

John, the author of the Gospel, informs us that:

⁴ The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

This information looks like irrelevant to the text as we could read the text without this verse. However, later we will see the importance of this information.

Then Jesus made a challenge to his disciples. In verse five, we read:

⁵ When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"

It's interesting that he made this challenge first of all to Philip. According to the Gospel of John, chapter one, verse forty four, Philip was from Bethsaida. So, he should know all the supermarkets and the bakeries in that place, there-

fore knows where they could buy some bread. Another interesting information is that Bethsaida means "Fish house", because the principal activity of the local people was fishing.

The text still tells us:

⁶ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

Jesus knew where to find bread. Actually, he himself is the bread of life. But the question is: did the disciples know where to find bread? Did the disciples know how to solve that need? Jesus already had in mind what he was going to do. But, were the disciples prepared to participate? Nowadays it's not different. In every situation where there is a necessity, God has in mind what he will do. The question is if we know how we can be part of it.

For the question that Jesus made: "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" we have three different answers: the answer of Philip, the answer of Andrew and the answer of the boy.

¹ – The answer of Philip was: "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have

a bite!" Some Bible version say half year of work, and some says two hundred denarius. Anyway, it was an amount that they didn't have available in that moment. How could they then get bread for so many people?

² – The answer of Andrew: "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" In the first moment it looks like Andrew has a solution: "Here is a boy with five breads and two small fish". The problem was that, even Andrew believed that it could help in something. His question: "but how far will they go among so many?" shows that he didn't believe in the solution of the problem.

³ – Third, we have the answer of the boy: this boy didn't say anything, but gave the only right answer to the question "where to find bread". About this boy, we don't know much: we don't know his name, we don't know who his parents were and we don't know where he lived. We just know that he had five breads and two fishes. We don't know anything else about him. It's very interesting that in the Bible many times people that do right things, that do the will of God, are simply anonymous people.

Then Jesus starts to act. The text says:

¹⁰ Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there).

The text looks a little ironic: "since you don't know what to do at least have the people to sit down". Can you do it? John affirms that there were around five thousand men, which means that the total of the number could be around ten or fifteen thousand people, or more.

¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

¹² When they all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." ¹³ So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.



Let's think a little bit about this text. We have here a challenge. "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"

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Maybe this is the challenge that we have today in many places around the world. Maybe God is asking us:

- Where is the solution for the HIV positive people in Africa?
- How can we take out those children from the favelas in São Paulo?
- Where are the doctors to take care of the people with vision problem in India?
- How to start a Bible Institute for the Quechuas in Peru?
- Where can we shelter the refugees here in Europe?

Perhaps those are the questions that God is making to us today. But remember:

⁶ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

"Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"

We have a great problem with our memories. Usually we don't remember things that have already happened. The disciples also had memory problems. In chapter two of the Gospel of John we see that the disciples were witnesses of the first miracle of Jesus, when he turned water into wine. Surely, up until the multiplication of the breads, they had already seen many other miracles. But when Jesus asks them a simple question, it seems that they have forgotten everything they have ever seen. We often forget the great things that God has done in our life, and so we do not believe that he can solve our problems today.

Here I want to recall an information that is in the text and that sometimes does not look to make much sense. In verse four we read: "4 The Jewish Passover Festival was near." What does this mean? Why does John mention this information here in the text? We could read the text normally without verse four. So why is this verse there?

What does the Festival of the Passover means?

For us it usually means the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, but for the Jews meant it the deliverance of the people of Israel from the slavery in Egypt. And what did God do with the people after they were set free from Egypt? He led them forty years in the desert, giving them bread every day. Pay attention to the irony of similarity, which John reminds us here. Soon after the first Passover, in the Old Testament:

- Not only did God feed five thousand, but more than six hundred thousand.
- Not only did God feed them for one day, but for forty years.

- God did not feed them around a lake full of fish, but in the middle of a desert.

In our text, when Jesus asks, "Where is bread?", the disciples do not know how to answer, because their memories did not help them.

⁴ The Jewish Passover Festival was near."

Is not our memory the same as of the disciples? Don't we also easily forget the great things that God has already done for us? And because of that we are left with no answers to the questions that God asks us?

Let's look again at the three answers given to Jesus' question:

¹ – Philip's answer was: "Two hundreds denarius would not buy enough bread for each one to receive a piece!"

Philip thought: "If we had that money, it still would not be enough. And we do not even have this money, so it's not possible." Here he represents the "pessimistic".

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The pessimistic says: "I don't think it's going to work ...", "That's not going to happen...", "There's going to be no money ...". Are we often not like Philip? God challenges us and we begin to find obstacles and excuses and we don't remember what God has done among us.

² – *The answer of Andrew: "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"*

Andrew represents another type of people. One who may even believe that something can be done, but does not get directly involved. Their thinking is, "Someone could do it..." "Someone should do it..." But I will not get involved, I have done enough. There's a boy here ... Andrew represents the "omissions" here.

³ – *Third, we have the boy: the one who said nothing, but gave the only right answer.*

The boy represents those who are willing to do whatever is possible and give to the Lord what they have in their hands. These kinds of people do normally ask: "What can I do?" Perhaps they say like Peter, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give to you" (Acts 3.6). How many boys like that can we find in between us? How many boys like that can we find in our churches?

We want to look on Jesus' perspective on this episode. How did he handle this needy?

Jesus took the bread and gave thanks. He distributed to the people as much as they wanted to eat. After they had enough, Jesus ordered the disciples to gather all

that was left. And they filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five breads and the two fish. One for each perplexed disciple who did not believe what Jesus could do.

Jesus can and wants to transform the little that we have in great blessings to the people around us, but he wants to see our disposition. Remember: He already has in mind what he's going to do, but he wants us to get involved. In this world,

- There are things that only God can do, so let Him do them.
- There are things that God expects us to do, so do not lose the privilege of getting involved in His Work.

The question is not what we can do, but rather how we are going to participate in what God is doing.

We have different types of people:

- Pessimistic (like Philip): "I do not think it will ..."
- Omit (as Andrew): "Someone could do ..."
- Willing (like the boy): "What can I do?"

What will be your response to the challenges that the Lord presents to you?

I have no doubt that the happiest person at the end of this story was that boy, of whom we do not even know the name or other information about him, but who shared what he had.

DR. CLAITON KUNZ

Director of the Baptist Pioneira Seminary in Ijuí/Brazil

SERMON IN VIENNA

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share with you. Today I want share from Romans chapter 12 verses 6 to 8:

„We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

Prophecy: Is to foresee the future and using it for the sake of the church.

Serving: means to sacrifice our lives totally to God.

Teaching: Is the one who lives out what he tells and teaches.

Encouraging: Giving motivation to people to do something.

Giving: Do it generously, when you give may your hand ache.

Getting advice: Who takes advice makes fewer mistakes and becomes successful.

Leading: A leader who is hard-working, fair and erudite becomes honorable.



Showing mercy

The letter to Romans was written by Paul. Paul from Tarsus in Turkey! Very Close where the Adana Baptist Church is today. Paul; talked with people one by one and face to face to evangelize and sometimes he talked to larger groups. He travelled sometimes walking, sometimes on horse or donkey, sometimes by boat, sometimes by ship. He fought a big battle. Paul is a real hero. To become a Pharisee was very difficult. You needed to know the Old Testament very well and he knew the Old Testament very well. He used his knowledge to tell about Jesus Christ. He used the gifts that were given Him by God. The letters he wrote during his journeys and when he was in prison was an indefinable service to the churches. He is a guide for us who showed us how to be a Christian. Paul was a good evangelist and teacher. He was showing that he was a disciple of Jesus Christ by being humble. He said "I am the worst sinner among all"

Prophecy

Prophecy is to foresee the future with the help of God. The Prophet needs to fulfill the mission of warning the church. People who prophecies need to be very careful, they need to discern the

spirits well. They should not change churches. They should stay in their church and fight for righteousness.

Serving

People serving in church as: Cookers, dish washers, cleaners ,organizers, translators, people who care for the sick, treasurers , people who work in the background that a conference or meeting goes well.

In the case of serving we can mention Mary Magdalene who devoted herself to service. Jesus Christ casted seven demons out from Maria Magdalene. One of the many women who witnessed the death of Jesus Christ on the cross was Mary Magdalene. She also witnessed that Jesus was wrapped in linen and that he was laid in a tomb. Sunday morning, she was one of the first to hear from the Angel that Jesus was raised. Jesus even appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Yes, Maria Magdalene's life has changed after believing. She devoted herself to serve Jesus and his disciples. She served in setting up tents, baking bread, cooking, setting up tables, caring for sick women, praying for them, spending time with them, comforting them.

We need to do everything as we are serving the Lord. If you minister with the intention to put yourself in the spot, one day it will come out. As a result you disappoint your ministry life and all the people around you who trust you. Therefore, repent and renew yourself. Do your

... serving in the best way. Spread the Gospel. Be sincere while serving. Sow the seed and God will let it grow. Blessing comes from the Lord.

“Gürkan”

I want to give an example of a young man. He came to church for 4 years. He wanted to get married but he couldn't find a Christian girl. I talked many times with him about the importance of marrying a Christian girl. He didn't listen. He married a Muslim girl. He said that he would persuade his wife to come to church after their wedding. His wife only came once after the wedding and stayed only for 10 minutes. They left the church that day and didn't come again. We were all very disappointed. He didn't even answer our phone calls. I thought that all the time we spent, all the teaching and serving was for nothing. Three years went by. One month ago suddenly he was standing inside the church. We were all shocked. He confessed that

his wife didn't want him to come to church and that he had wrong thoughts about the church. However, he missed the church and the love between brothers and sisters so much that he wanted to come back. We are very happy that he came back and realized once again the importance of good serving. Gürkan now prays for his wife, that she might come to church. We pray for her also.

“Erol and Seren”

A family who came to our church to do student work served very well in our church for two years. Suddenly they decided to leave our church to support another project. We blessed them and send them but we were very sad that they left our church and that they started to serve in a different church. After two years their project had finished and they moved to a different suburb in Izmir. They started church service where they lived. They came to talk with us. They said that they were deeply impressed by the way of our serving in church while they were in our church. They said that they realized how effective we were

serving among Muslims. They told us that they wanted to become a member of the Turkish Baptist Alliance. In 2016 we opened the Izmir Menemen Baptist Church which is located in the North of Izmir.

If it is teaching then teach

The painting of “The Tortoise Trainer” shows that a tortoise trainer is also a teacher. It is a painting by Osman Hamdi Bey which was crafted in 1906 in Bursa. It is the most expensive painting of the Turks. The value is 5 Million Euro.

When there was a party or celebration in the Ottoman Empire Time they would put candles on tortoises. The tortoises which walked around with the candles would create an interesting sight when it got dark. In the painting you can see a small drum at his back and a ney flute in his hand. Accompanied with music who would train the tortoises. To train tortoises needs expertness and patience. Tortoises are very slowly moving creatures. However, in time they definitely reach their goals. They live for many years. Because their shield is

hard, they have more opportunity to live longer than other creatures.

Teachers need to be patient. They need to have good knowledge and be eager to learn new information. They must be investigators and readers. Not everybody can be a teacher. If a teacher is good then he/she gives good fruit and these fruits become lasting. The teacher doesn't give fish; instead teaches his/her students how to use the fishhook. So, the students learn how to catch fish. Jesus told His disciples that he will make them fishers of men. During his three years of serving Jesus taught his 12 disciples.

If it is to encourage, then give encouragement

Encouragement means giving motivation to people to do something. To encourage a person who has no motivation is very difficult. To encourage people in church to be evangelists, first we have to be motivated evangelists. To encourage people in church to be hospitable,

first the pastor needs to invite the people in his house. To encourage somebody to do something which we wouldn't like to do doesn't mean encouraging. We need to encourage people in church according to their gifts. Some people in church are waiting to be encouraged. They are gifted but they are not aware of it. Encouraging in this moment is very vital.

I met a young evangelist named Sükrü. He wanted to plant a church. I encouraged him and decided to support him with my tithes. So, he could rent a small shop where the church could meet. Sükrü was very active and hardworking. He built good relationships with people and with authorities in the city. He organized very good events to share the gospel. I saw my youth in Sükrü. I always kept encouraging him. Christoph Haus came to Adana and they decided to support Sükrü. Four years ago Adana Baptist Church started and is growing.

If it is giving, then give generously

The offering you give may hurt you and your hand. You need to give generously. We need to encourage our church members to give their tithes and donations. As it is written in the Bible: "The Lord blesses the ones who give hundred times".

If it is to lead do it diligently

To be a leader in church requires a lot of responsibility. Especially to be a leader in a church in a Muslim country is a very sensitive situation. Because people, institutions, organizations see us like a harmful insect. Some nationalist groups see us as agents of the West, traitors of our country, who are collaborating with the West.

Leaders need to be transparent and good servants. They must not take the role of being an agent against other countries. They should be busy totally with the church ministry. They should have close relationships with the community and NGO's. Mutual love and respect needs to exist between them and the authorities. In the police week they should

congratulate the police and send a flower to the head of police. They should attend their invitations as much as they can. For example; if the Mayor invites us to a park opening we should attend. We should attend sport activities in our suburb. We can proclaim the love of God to all kinds of people in different levels by our words and by our acts. Leaders need to have good relationship with Muslims and not discredit or humiliate Islam. Inviting people to Christianity by discrediting another religion does not fit to Christian ethic. That they understand about Christ first we have to learn and understand the message of Christ. We can give what we have to them, the Good News and love of Christ. Atheist, Feudalists, Communists and the radical right wing are against us. We should not criticize other beliefs and systems by coinciding with them.

Can we be advice givers?

Of course! Giving advice requires sincerity. If we give advice to somebody it means to share our experiences. By sharing our experiences we can be helpful to others. The one who gives advice needs to be encouraging. I thought a lot if I can give advice to a person who has fallen into a mistake or sin because I am a sinner also.

First; could I give advice to myself??

I can only advice my brother by taking into account Matthew 7:3 where it says "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"

Even If I saw my brother has fallen into sin, then I would the same way give advice by thinking about my sin. Actually in all sermons, teachings and evangelism

there is the message of giving advice.

One pastor told me: "The preaching of us old pastors is mainly about advice; I guess it is because of our older age. There are experiences we gained in our long faith life."

I remember today that I was so happy when I recognized my first sin and repented. It was like the joy of a man who is thirsty in the desert and loses his camel and just as he is dying he finds his camel. Psams 32:8 „I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." The advice of God had directed me to repent. Somehow after every repentance I see myself like a child. When I advise myself I simply unconditionally love and accept my place in God.

The more I am strong and holy the more I have effect on the church. If a pastor in a church is not a role

model or doesn't fulfill his duty, the advice he gives is empty and meaningless. Malachi 2:7: "For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth."

Therefore, we have to act the way we want our church to act. By only giving advice the church doesn't become the way we want. Because only giving advice is the cheapest and easiest way. Instead of saying don't do that, act like that it is long and hard to tell why they shouldn't do it. But we need to choose this way. To prevent the unwanted behavior in our church first of all we have to observe ourselves and control our behavior. Learnings that rest upon our living and practice are more permanent and meaningful. We need to act with truth to our church and avoid lying. If we promise something, even if it is absurd we need to hold to our word. When we are wrong we need to apolo-

gize and admit we did wrong. We need to act what we say and say what we act. We need to avoid contradiction. What we advise the church we should exercise in front of them.

Especially we need to give importance to honesty. Honesty causes other people to appreciate and respect us. If we act true and honest to others we continue to act to ourselves in that way. Then also the church grows similar to us in honesty. If we are a good role model as a Pastor, our church will also believe the values we believe and protect them. If we are faithful and do the services seriously and constantly, care and protect the poor, orphans and needy, our church will also apply what they see in us when they are grown up.

Finally to summarize, when we advise the church we need to love them, encourage them, exalt them, confirm them, believe in their capacity, create a fun environment, be positive, determined and consistent.

If it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully

For 4 years we are helping Syrian refugees with food packages. We met a lot of Syrian families and listened to their stories. These are very sad stories: Rape, hunger, thirst, facing death many times, walking and walking for days in

fear, fleeing from Assad and his army, seeking safe places and finally reaching İzmir. They don't know the language, Turkish is difficult.

One man told me: I was a journalist in Aleppo, I was well off but now I collect plastic from the trash that I have something to eat.

Turks are a merciful nation. A Syrian family invited us. The flat was empty. They did not have a refrigerator. They were washing their clothes by hand. The woman lost her husband in the war and came to Izmir with her three children. For one week they lived in the park. One Turkish family rented a flat above themselves for the family. The apartment building management gave her a job as a caretaker and cleaner. If she can't pay her rent, the residents of the 20 flats come together and supply her rent. This is wonderful!

Everybody is different from each other. God gave us different gifts and it is important to use this gifts to serve God; in evangelizing, praying and sharing.

ERTAN CEVIK

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