

Philosophy of Ministry

Name: Joseph Browne

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Professor: Dr. Wanda Walborn

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## Introduction

When I think of my philosophy of ministry, I begin by considering the term ministry. I reflect on the fact that throughout the Bible from Old to New Testament scriptures, one can read of different individuals who were called to minister to others as guided and directed by God. In the Old Testament, we can read of Elisha leaving his parents, “<sup>21</sup> Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him” (King James Version Bible, 2019, I Kings 19:21). Elisha did this in his support of Elijah and as a servant of God to God’s people. When our attention centers on the New Testament, we can view Timothy ministering to Paul the Apostle. Timothy’s efforts served as extended hands and presence to Paul. These are examples of individual ministering opportunities, but can serve as microcosmic examples of taking the time to minister to others.

Jesus Christ and all that he did serves as the ideal template for, as well as a central pivotal component of my philosophy of ministry. Jesus embodied holistic outreach to those he encountered while he was on earth. As expressed by the Great Commission, Jesus prepared His disciples and all of us as His followers on how to prepare for and execute our efforts in terms of ministering to others. “<sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching to obey everything I have commanded you” (New International Version Bible, 2011, Matt 28: 19-20).

In connection to the Great Commission, my philosophy of ministry cannot be limited to a particular ethnic, social, political or religious group of individuals. Integral to my philosophy of ministry is that I must see all people as deserving being ministered to with the gospel message that brings salvation. As stated, “<sup>14</sup> How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them” (New International Version Bible, 2011, Romans 10: 14)?

I must be willing to spread the good news of salvation and the transformational power of God which can be impactful in the lives of others. This transformational power is necessary as part of my philosophy of ministry so that I will not be ashamed to proclaim the truth of God's Word. I must also be His ambassador and agent for promoting and encouraging change in the lives of others. As stated, <sup>16</sup>"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile" (New International Version Bible, 2011, Romans 1:16).

I must endeavor to be bold in declaring the truth of God's Word and seeking for the changes in lives of others and realization of purpose and worth as <sup>9</sup>"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (New International Version Bible, 2011, I Peter 2:9). Some are likely unaware of the depth of darkness they have been living in or the sin patterns which have been prevalent in their lives, so it is necessary for my philosophy of ministry to incorporate ministering to individuals in different spiritual depths and levels. My efforts must seek to reach them where they are and to be willing to take the time to lead them to where God has for them.

To accomplish this will require seeking the power of the Holy Spirit as spoken of <sup>38</sup>"And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (New International Version Bible, 2011, Acts 2: 38). Understanding this and tapping into the power of the Holy Spirit is especially needed as we engage in ministry today. This is due in part because <sup>14</sup>"The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit" (New International Version

Bible, 2011, I Corinthians 2: 14). As I endeavor to be assured of Holy Spirit empowerment as I minister to others, I must also be definitively assured of my faith in God.

### **Statement of Faith**

As a foundation supports the structure of a building and helps to ensure stability, so is the same way I view my statement of faith to denote what I believe. I wholeheartedly believe that there is only one God, Who is holy and eternal. I believe that He is the Creator of all things whether I can or cannot see them with my physical eyes. My God is infinite in His ability to execute justice and wisdom, but at the same time demonstrate His love, concern and grace to all of humankind. His glory, wisdom and graciousness transcend time, generations and locations. Our one God consists of the three in the God-head of God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer and the Holy Spirit Our Comforter (Genesis 1: 26).

I believe that Jesus Christ became man and dwelt with humankind (John 1:14). Jesus died for our sins but rose victoriously again, so we live for a resurrected Redeemer (I Cor. 15:12-19, Luke 24: 6). The Holy Spirit after Jesus departed from the earth, became Our Comforter and Guide into all truth (John 16: 7 & 13). The truth that the Holy Spirit guides us into leads us to a greater understanding of the plan of salvation (Eph. 1: 3 -4). The plan of salvation is necessary and remains in effect to address the sin nature we are born with (Rom. 7: 1-25, 8: 1-39 and Col. 3:9).

I also believe that each of us were created with a free will to accept or not accept God's gift of His salvation plan which is extended to us (Prov. 16:9, Deut. 30: 19&20, Rev. 3:20). I appreciate the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21) which brings about a transformation in our disposition and mindset for me to work for God (Col. 3: 23 & 24). As I consider all He does in and for my life, I pause and celebrate via the ordinances of Baptism (I Cor. 12: 13, I Peter 3:21,

Acts 2:41) and the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26: 26- 29, Luke 22: 19 & 20). This is all done as we look forward to Christ's second return (I Thess 4: 17, Mark 13: 32 & I Cor. 15: 52).

What I and others engage in here on earth is only a foreshadow of what is to come. <sup>9</sup>After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. <sup>10</sup>They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands" (New International Version Bible, 2011, Rev. 7: 9 – 10). This is the eschatological expectation of what is to come, but I desire and determine for it to be a vibrant component of my current philosophy of ministry.

### **Core Ministry Values**

Consequently, a key component of my philosophy of ministry must include seeking for God's wisdom and guidance to live a life that is pleasing to God. As stated, <sup>1</sup>"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (New International Version Bible, 2011, Romans 12: 1). Some may ask what are my core ministry values? I will proceed to discuss some of my core values.

### **Worship**

One of my core ministry values is worship. We honor and express our appreciation to God when we engage in worship. Whether our focus is personal or corporate worship, there are numerous scriptures which highlight the importance and necessity of worship. It is written Psalm 95:6-7 (KJV) <sup>6</sup>"O come, let us worship and bow down: Let us kneel before the LORD our

maker. <sup>7</sup> For he is our God; And we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.” (New International Version Bible, 2011, Psalm 95: 6- 7). When I consider this in the context of corporate worship, I can view it as an opportunity for everyone to participate in worship, whether young or old, women or men, able-bodied or with challenges. This is not limited to just a particular cultural or ethnic dimension but also includes everyone from diverse national backgrounds. “<sup>9</sup>All the nations you have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name. <sup>10</sup>For You are great and do wondrous things, you alone are God” (New International Version Bible, 2011, Psalm 86: 9 -10). This denotes the fact that God is worthy to be worshipped no matter part of the world I am or we are.

There is also a personal component of worship which cannot be negated. Psalm 34:1 state, “I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” As I strive to worship God as I engage in ministry, I want to encourage others to do their personal best to glorify God as well. Everyone can present their sacrifice of praise and honor to God as their acts of ministry for Him. Hebrews 13:15 says, “Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.”

### **Prayer and lament**

There is also a focus on lamenting and prayer. Taking the time to lament as part of prayer times, provides enriched opportunities to go before God with different prayer requests. This speaks of time when I can come boldly before God with my brokenness about the brokenness in my family, local community, national settings and global context. This provides a uniquely dynamic environment for vulnerability and for transformation to occur. David expressed a time when he pours out what he is experiencing before God. He prayed, “Hear my prayer, O Lord; let my cry for help come to You. Do not hide Your face from me when I am in distress.” (New

International Version Bible, 2011, Psalm 102: 1-2). I must be willing to pour out before God and encourage others to do so as well.

I can also reference Nehemiah as an example of being physically far but still having a heart-connection with what is going on in the Jerusalem of my life. Nehemiah 1: 3 & 4 “The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire. When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.” My personal and collective lamenting with others in prayer must incorporate those challenging things which are happening around us.

### **Bible Reading, Bible Study and Meditation**

To be effective as an ambassador for God requires me to be diligent in my pursuit of being familiar with the Bible and God’s guidelines and instructions for ministering to others. <sup>11</sup> I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you. <sup>15</sup> I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways” (New International Version Bible, 2011, Psalm 119: 11, 15). There must be a heart-felt connection to and commitment to spending time in studying His Word. However, it is also imperative that I consistently provide means for that to be fostered, cultivated, and sustained in the lives of others. Yes, it is important to preach the Word in season and out of season, but there must also be promoted personal and corporate opportunities for Bible Study. This is not just reviewing and reflecting upon my favorite passage of scripture, but earnestly engaging in exploring the hidden truths and life-skill nuggets, which are packed into the Bible. My prayer and focus are to be in alignment with “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (New International Version Bible, 2011, II Timothy 2:15).

### **Love in Action or Love in Deed**

I must live connected to the fact, “<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’<sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment.<sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ (New International Version Bible, 2011, Matt. 22: 37-39). These scriptures reinforce the importance for love to exist and be demonstrated in our interaction with those of the household of faith and with non-believers. “If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing” (New International Version Bible, 2011, I Cor. 13: 3). This highlights the significance that our motive and agenda for engagement in ministry is to germinate from a right spirit, attitude, and mindset in order to please God and to be effective.

“<sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (New International Version Bible, 2011, John 13: 35). Love cannot be simply denoted as a noun when it comes to being Christ-like in our daily lives. Christ is the perfect epitome of sacrificial love in action: even to the point of being willing to die for us. We might not have to physically lay down our lives for the cause of Christ, but we should all be willing to make sacrifices and be living sacrifices in our service to God and one another. “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (New International Version Bible, 2011, I John 4:11).

### **Holistic Care Approach**

In connection to our love for one another, as we strive to minister to others, we are to be willing in developing a holistic care approach. This is another key component of my philosophy of ministry. God’s *Missio Dei* encompasses more than a theoretical approach, but also takes into consideration a practical angle for ministering and connecting with those around us. We are to engage in promoting and proclaiming the redemptive reality of the Good News to those in our

communities to address their spiritual needs. Additionally, there are a variety of societal needs which we are called not to disregard. Rather, I must incorporate them into how, when, and why I minister to all people I interact with. As stated, “<sup>17</sup> Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause” (New International Version Bible, 2011, Isaiah 1: 17). This should also be evident as I seek to fulfill “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (New International Version Bible, 2011, James 1: 27).

God wants for all to be saved and for right relationship with Him to be cultivated. This includes the holistic care for needs of the marginalized and oppressed as denoted in “<sup>37</sup> Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?” (New International Version Bible, 2011, Matt. 25: 37 -38). I believe that we have a right and responsibility to be God’s extended hands, eyes, and feet in this present world to serve the marginalized, oppressed, and neglected.

## **Non-Negotiables**

### **Presence and Power of the Triune Godhead**

Above are provided some of the core values which I would incorporate into my philosophy of ministry. One of my non-negotiables is that my ministry focus is to operate in and pursue the presence and power of the triune Godhead. Some denominations and religious groups tend to focus on Jesus Christ only and disregard the functioning of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. When I examine the Word of God, I see the Triune Godhead (Trinity) working and operating together. In Genesis 1:26 the Triune Godhead made man. In Matthew 3: 13, 16 – 17, I

can read of Jesus being baptized, the Spirit of God descending as a dove and God the Father speaking. Matthew 28:19 instructs us to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This is further supported when 2 Corinthians 13: 14 speaks of the grace of Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be to be ours. All the way from Genesis to Revelation, I am reminded and encouraged about the presence and power of the Triune Godhead being evident in lives.

### **Seeking God's Guidance**

My second non-negotiable is seeking God's guidance in terms of decisions to be made. It may become easier for some people over time to be self-reliant in their decisions and interactions with others. I have repeatedly proven and can personally attest to others, that are exponential benefits in seek God's guidance as part of their daily decision-making process. I can testify to Proverbs 3:5-6 in regards to trusting in God and simply following my own understanding. God wants me to earnestly determine to spend time in prayer before Him so that I can hear His voice and follow His leading and direction for my life. I do not want to operate solely based upon my intellect, past practice, or personal ability. I encourage others to practice, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (New International Version Bible, 2011, Phil. 4:6).

### **Community**

My third non-negotiable relates to promoting the concept of community. Each one of us needs the encouragement and support of one another. We must "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." (New International Version Bible, 2011, I Thess. 5:11). Promoting community in my philosophy of ministry emphasizes the

multiplicity of benefits as the communal environment and relationships are fostered. This is even demonstrated as I engage in times of in-person or virtual platforms for a community of saints to come together in support of “<sup>25</sup>Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” (New International Version Bible, 2011, Heb. 10:25). There will be times when I and others will not always agree in perspectives on particular subject topics. However, the bigger picture is that of being present and being willing to share in bearing the burdens of one another.

### **Diversity**

My fourth non-negotiable is that of fostering an environment where diversity is encouraged and promoted. It is important to demonstrate that the God I serve is not exclusive as to the people groups and cultures in which He is willing to extend His love, grace, blessings and presence to. It can be easy to become limited in who I interact with based upon present proximity of where I live, work and often associate with in my free time. What was instructed or commissioned by Jesus via Matthew 28: 19 to be cross-cultural in our efforts was also further “encouraged when it was stated “<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (New International Version Bible, 2011, Acts 1: 8).

### **Conclusion**

My prayer is that my philosophy of ministry at present and for the future will continue to glorify God. My God, forever be at the core of it all. My God, may Your mission of ministering to and impacting lives direct what occurs. May You be pleased and honored in all that we do.

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