



GGWO | November | 2011

Affiliation

Newsletter

Helpers in the Lord by Pastor Jim Morrison



*"I commend to you **Phoebe** our sister, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That you receive her in the Lord, as becomes saints, and that you assist her in whatever business she has need of you, for she has been a helper of many, and of myself also" (Rom. 16:1-2).*

Paul described Phoebe with two words - *"diakonos"* (servant) and *"prostatis"* (helper). The first word means attendant or servant, one who waits to "run an errand." The same word is used for the man (2 Tim. 3:12) who fills the office of deacon as a leader in the church. The second word describes one who takes a leading role in assisting the church leaders. Paul instructed the church to *"assist her in whatever business"* she had need. Men and women were to be available to help this helper. The footnote at the end of the chapter says that Phoebe had also been entrusted with bringing Paul's letter to the church in Cenchrea. Paul trusted her to deliver the written Word of God. What a tremendous responsibility!

In 16:3 Paul greeted another woman, **Priscilla**, calling her a "helper." The word here is *"sunergos"* which means co-laborer or companion in the work. In 16:6 Paul greeted **Mary**, writing that she had "bestowed much labor" on Paul and his team. He used the word *"kopiao"* (to work to the point of exhaustion) and *"polus"* (much). Paul greeted three more women - **Tryphena, Tryphosa** and **Persis** (16:7, 12) using the same words to describe their hard work "in the Lord."

In 16:13 Paul saluted **the mother of Rufus**. Her name is not mentioned, but she was the wife of Simon the Cyrene who carried Jesus' cross. Paul wrote that she was "chosen in the Lord." He also called her his "mother." How greatly she was esteemed in Paul's eyes! Paul also greeted **Julia** in 16:15, a woman believed to be a member of the imperial household. Paul referred to her as one of the "saints" in the church at Rome. In all, Paul mentioned eight women, all with the highest regards.

The Marlboro church, and the entire Greater Grace family, have recently said good-bye to a godly servant, a wonderful sister and helper in the Lord, Ruth (Clayter) Dowse. She is my sister-in-law, and

was my secretary in the Marlboro church. She was an amazing help to me for over twenty years in three different congregations. She also served as a gifted and loving youth worker in the South Berwick church.

I understand Paul's desire to honor these eight women in Rome by name. Every pastor treasures such helpers, workers, and leaders. They go beyond natural strength to serve in countless ways. They are precious examples to the local assembly. They think of the details that others may miss. They do the things that are often overlooked. The terms Paul used ("working to the point of exhaustion," "much labor," "servant," "co-laborer," "saint" and "mother") describe those women who love the ministry, who have a great capacity for hard work, and who experience joy in living "for His body's sake" (Col. 1:24).

Ruth was battling cancer for over four years, yet she rarely missed a church service or a Bible college class. She continued to carry out the countless details required in a church office. In the final weeks she could not climb the stairs to the office. She kept apologizing for that. She so wanted to continue to "cover the bases" for the pastor. Ruth loved to tease and have fun, yet she never allowed any familiarity in our relationship. She knew the names of every man, woman and child in the church even of those who seldom attended. She always knew who was there and who wasn't. She never complained about people or the workload or her own pain. She never betrayed a confidence.

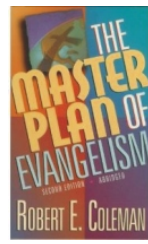
Pastors, you are very blessed if you have such helpers in your church. Show how much you appreciate them while you can.

"Quote of the month"

"Most people have the idea that it is good to be strong. But the weakest people are the strongest when grace becomes the attitude of their life, the expression of their heart, and the only cause they walk in. Weakness humiliates us to the point where only God can help us. We are so devastated that only mercy accepts our case. Many times when placed in adversity and weakness, we reject ourselves through evaluating the summation of our weakness. But it is not through rejecting weakness that we find strength. Strength is in accepting the grace of Christ."

Pastor Carl H. Stevens

BOOK OF THE MONTH



The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert E. Coleman is a classic from almost forty years ago.

Mr. Coleman wrote, "Jesus was on business for God (Luke 2:49). He lived, He died, and He rose again according to schedule. Like a general plotting his course of battle, the Son of God calculated to win. He could not afford to take a chance. Weighing every alternative and variable factor in human experience, He conceived a plan that would not fail. ...It all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow Him. ...His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow. ...Men were to be his method of winning the world to God."

ANNOUNCEMENT

I've neglected to announce the results of the pastors' voting at Convention. The Affiliation Council remains unchanged: Glen Cannon, Jon Boyce, Brian Lange (beginning the 1st year of a 3-year term); Matti Sirvio, James Morrison, David Moore (beginning the 3rd year of a 3-year term); Drew Wileczek, Karl Silva, David Stambovsky (beginning the 2nd year of a 3-year term. The Regional Representatives: Stan Collins (Latin America), Juha Haatanen (Europe/Russia), Jomy Antony (Asia). As far as I know at this time the Representatives for Central Asia/Middle East and Africa have not been chosen. Please let me know if those choices have been made.

COMING EVENTS

- Northeast Conference in Marlboro, MA, with Pastor Schaller,December 9-10
- Fitly Framed Conference in Baltimore,December 29-31
- Eurocon 2012,March 6-10

CONTRIBUTIONS

If you'd like to contribute with suggestions, quotes, news, recommended books or articles, ideas for ministry, practical tips for pastors, etc., please email them to: prmorrisson@mail.com.