

The Preaching Work

(1 Corinthians 15:6, 7) After that he appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time, most of whom are still with us, though some have fallen asleep in death. ⁷ After that he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

(Matthew 28:16-20) However, the 11 disciples went to Gal'i-lee to the mountain where Jesus had arranged for them to meet. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they did obeisance, but some doubted. ¹⁸ Jesus approached and spoke to them, saying: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth. ¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things."

(Acts 1:1-8) The first account, O The·oph'i·lus, I composed about all the things Jesus started to do and to teach ² until the day that he was taken up, after he had given instructions through holy spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After he had suffered, he showed himself alive to them by many convincing proofs. He was seen by them throughout 40 days, and he was speaking about the Kingdom of God. ⁴ While he was meeting with them, he ordered them: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but keep waiting for what the Father has promised, about which you heard from me; ⁵ for John, indeed, baptized with water, but you will be baptized with holy spirit not many days after this." ⁶ So when they had assembled, they asked him: "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?" ⁷ He said to them: "It does not belong to you to know the times or seasons that the Father has placed in his own jurisdiction. ⁸ But you will receive power when the holy spirit comes upon you, and you will be witnesses of me in Jerusalem, in all Ju·de'a and Sa·mar'i·a, and to the most distant part of the earth."

(1 Corinthians 12:4-31) Now there are different gifts, but there is the same spirit; ⁵ and there are different ministries, and yet there is the same Lord; ⁶ and there are different activities, and yet it is the same God who performs them all in everyone. ⁷ But the manifestation of the spirit is given to each one for a beneficial purpose. ⁸ For to one is given speech of wisdom through the spirit, to another speech of knowledge according to the same spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one spirit, ¹⁰ to yet another operations of powerful works, to another prophesying, to another discernment of inspired expressions, to another different tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ But all these operations are performed by the very same spirit, distributing to each one respectively just as it wills.

¹² For just as the body is one but has many members, and all the members of that body, although many, are one body, so too is the Christ. ¹³ For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink one spirit.

¹⁴ For, indeed, the body is made up not of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am no part of the body," that does not make it no part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am no part of the body," that does not make it no

part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If it were all hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But now God has arranged each of the body members just as he pleased.

¹⁹ If they were all the same member, where would the body be? ²⁰ But now they are many members, yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," or again, the head cannot say to the feet, "I do not need you." ²² On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are necessary, ²³ and the parts of the body that we think to be less honorable we surround with greater honor, so our unseemly parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴ whereas our attractive parts do not need anything. Nevertheless, God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that had a lack, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but its members should have mutual concern for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all the other members suffer with it; or if a member is glorified, all the other members rejoice with it.

²⁷ Now you are Christ's body, and each of you individually is a member. ²⁸ And God has assigned the **respective** ones in the congregation: first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then powerful works; then gifts of healings; helpful services; abilities to direct; different tongues. ²⁹ Not all are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? Not all perform powerful works, do they? ³⁰ Not all have gifts of healings, do they? Not all speak in tongues, do they? Not all are interpreters, are they? ³¹ But keep striving for the greater gifts. And yet I will show you a surpassing way.

(Ephesians 4:4-16) One body there is, and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷ Now undeserved kindness was given to each one of us according to how the Christ measured out the free gift. ⁸ For it says: "When he ascended on high he carried away captives; he gave gifts in men." ⁹ Now what does the expression "he ascended" mean but that he also descended into the lower regions, that is, the earth? ¹⁰ The very one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might give fullness to all things.

¹¹ And he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers, ¹² with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, to build up the body of the Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the oneness of the faith and of the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to being a full-grown man, attaining the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ. ¹⁴ So we should no longer be children, tossed about as by waves and carried here and there by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in deceptive schemes. ¹⁵ But speaking the truth, let us by love grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ. ¹⁶ From him all the body is harmoniously joined together and made to cooperate through every joint that gives what is needed. When each **respective** member functions properly, this contributes to the growth of the body as it builds itself up in love.

[w13 5/15 p. 7 par. 19] So let all of us show appreciation for that treasure by doing our best to fulfill our role as evangelizers.

(1 Corinthians 12:19) If they were all the same member, where would the body be?

(Ephesians 4:11) And he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers,

(2 Timothy 1:2; 4:5) ²to Timothy.... ⁵You, though, keep your senses in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry.

(Acts 21:8) The next day we left and came to Caes·a·re'a, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelizer, who was one of the seven men, and we stayed with him.

(Colossians 1:25) I became a minister of this congregation in accord with the stewardship from God that was given to me in your behalf to preach the word of God fully,

(Romans 10:8-10) But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your own mouth and in your own heart”; that is, “the word” of faith, which we are preaching. ⁹ For if you publicly declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation.

(Luke 8:15) As for that on the fine soil, these are the ones who, after hearing the word with a fine and good heart, retain it and bear fruit with endurance.

(Matthew 10:32) “Everyone, then, who acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father who is in the heavens.

(1 Peter 3:15) But sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone who demands of you a reason for the hope you have, but doing so with a mild temper and deep respect.

(John 3:16) “For God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.

(Romans 10:9, 10) For if you publicly declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation.

(John 3:14, 15) And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone believing in him may have everlasting life.

(John 20:31) But these have been written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and because of believing, you may have life by means of his name.

[w03 12/1 p. 29] The modern-day watchman class, **anointed** Christians, have been warning about the doom of Christendom, antitypical Jerusalem. When the “great tribulation” strikes and devastates “Babylon the Great,” the world empire of false religion, the **anointed** Ezekiel class will need to say nothing more about the demise of Christendom, which constitutes a major part of that empire.—Matthew 24:21; Revelation 17:1, 2, 5.

[w91 3/15 p. 14, 15] ³ Ezekiel resolutely carried out that commission, serving as a single instrument in the divine hand. Similarly, God now has a single organizational instrument in his control. The Ezekiel class, the **anointed** remnant, is at the forefront of the work of giving a final witness, with “a great crowd” of “other sheep” rallying around in support. (Revelation 7:9, 10; John 10:16) Together they are “one flock,” with the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ, leading them under the sovereignty of the grand Chariot Rider, Jehovah God.

¹⁰ As in Ezekiel’s case, the **anointed** Ezekiel class have accepted their God-given commission and are fulfilling it. If we are Jehovah’s Witnesses, we should remember that our life and the lives of others depend upon our obedience. (1 Timothy 4:15, 16) Each Witness needs to keep pace with Jehovah’s organization. God will not tie us to his chariot and drag us along. Apathy and a divided heart demean the Chariot Rider. So Jehovah’s visible organization exhorts us to keep divine interests at the center of our lives. A consistent response to such exhortation keeps us in step with God’s organization and elevates our sacred ministry above the routine, the mechanical. Certainly, Jehovah’s people as a whole display remarkable devotion. Our individual part is to maintain the pace.

[w19.04 2 ¶1] CHRIST JESUS commanded his followers to “go, . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations.” (Matt. 28:19) **All** of God’s faithful servants want to learn how they can “fully accomplish” this ministry that they have been given to do. (2 Tim. 4:5)

How would you react if your neighbor knocked on your door and told you that it was your job to mow his lawn, or clean his kitchen?

Or...

How would you react if your neighbor knocked on your door and asked you very nicely if you could please give him a helping hand with one of his chores because he was incapable of doing it on his own?

Isn't the second scenario so much better?

The August 30th 2020 study article "Return to Me" is a good example of the mindset of the GB. The word "*inactive*" was used 29 times in that article, which we know refers to those who have stopped evangelizing. Paragraph 3 says: "We need to work hard to find those who want to return to Jehovah." In the minds of the GB, if you are not doing the evangelizing work assigned to the

"*chosen ones*" (Mt 24:31), you are rejecting Jehovah. That is a very disheartening message for those brothers and sisters. It is no wonder that with the brothers feeling this way about them that they stop coming to the meetings and stop associating with the brothers and sisters, perhaps only showing up for the memorial each year.

It is the Ezekiel class, which are the chosen ones, who have been given the task of warning others. (Eze 3:17-21) Yes, the appointment to preach falls squarely at *their* feet. (Ac 10:41, 42; Col 1:25) Ezekiel 3:21 does not say that the righteous one who does not sin, must in turn warn others not to sin if he wishes to be saved. Ezekiel speaks of two groups that are saved: 1) the ones who do the warning, and 2) those who heed that warning.

Here is what Paul told Timothy, who was an anointed evangelizer. (2Ti 4:5)

(1 Timothy 4:16) Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Persevere in these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.

At Matthew 28:16-20 Jesus arranged to meet with the 11 apostles privately where he gave to them this command:

(Matthew 28:19) Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit,

He gave that command to preach to them, not to the whole congregation.

(Acts 1:1, 2) The first account, O The-oph'i-lus, I composed about all the things Jesus started to do and to teach ² until the day that he was taken up, after he had given instructions through holy spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

Yes, the instructions recorded at Matthew 28:19 were given "*to the apostles he had chosen*", those 11 "*men of Galilee*." (Ac 1:11; Mt 28:16)

In Revelation an angel tells John this:

(Revelation 19:10) "Be careful! Do not do that! I am only a fellow slave of you and of your brothers who have the work of witnessing concerning Jesus. (see also Re 22:9)

Who are "*your brothers*" spoken of here? They are defined in the previous verse:

(Revelation 19:9) And he tells me, "Write: Happy are those invited to the evening meal of the Lamb's marriage." Also, he tells me: "These are the true sayings of God."

Yes, they are the bride class, which is the "*chosen ones*" (Mt 24:31). They are the ones who make the invitation, though others are allowed to help if they '*wish*.'

(Revelation 22:17) And the spirit and the bride keep on saying, "Come!" and let anyone hearing say, "Come!" and let anyone thirsting come; let anyone who wishes take life's water free.

Christ himself also tells us who "*have the work of witnessing concerning Jesus*":

(Revelation 12:17) So the dragon became enraged at the woman and went off to wage war with the remaining ones of her offspring, who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness concerning Jesus.

Yes, it is "*the remaining ones of her offspring*", that is to say, the remnant who are still on earth today, who have been assigned that "*work*".

No scripture lists the participation of the non-chosen ones in the field ministry as a deciding factor on whether or not they survive Armageddon. Warning others of what is to come is the responsibility of the Ezekiel class (chosen ones), and Ezekiel does not say that you must join him in his warning of others or else you won't survive.

Am i saying that you should not take part in teaching others? **Not at all.** If you have joined his flock (Jn 10:16), whether you are one of the "*chosen ones*" or not, then you are part of that "*one shepherd*" (Jn 10:16), and a shepherd teaches the sheep. (Jas 3:1) And if you wish to assist the chosen ones in their evangelizing work, you can do that as well. Just don't expect a greater reward for doing so. (Mt 20:13, 14) We would not want to be like those at Mt 20:8-16 and complain that our reward should be more than those who don't evangelize, or that they should receive no reward at all. (see my article "First will be Last and the Last First") If we had that attitude, we would be no better than the brother of the prodigal son. (Lu 15:11-32)

Even if they said that it was their calling and that you could not help since you are not one of them, Revelation 22:17 says "*let anyone hearing say, 'Come!' and let anyone thirsting come; let anyone who wishes take life's water free.*" The ones who hear are not being commanded to say "*Come!*" any more than the thirsty ones are being commanded to drink. As the verse continues, it is up to anyone who "*wishes*". So whether you are merely a thirsty one who wishes to drink, or you wish to also say "*Come!*", you are allowed to do so. But it is a voluntary thing, not a requirement for surviving Armageddon. Though we should all strive to do what we can, some are just not up to the task.

(1 Corinthians 12:29, 31) Not all are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they?³¹ But keep striving for the greater gifts.

Paul even said that only some would engage in the preaching work:

(Ephesians 4:11) And he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers,

Even though Paul knew that, he still became angry at Mark because he did not go with them to the work. (Ac 13:13)

(Acts 15:38) Paul, however, was not in favor of taking him along with them, seeing that he had departed from them in Pam·phyl'i-a and had not gone with them to the work.

Perhaps Paul had expectations based on personal opinion. And perhaps Paul's words at Colossians 4:10 ("if he ever comes to you") show that even a decade later Paul still thought that Mark was not living up to his expectations. (Mt 7:1)

Though we are not required to participate in the evangelizing work, we do not keep our belief a secret, or only speak of it in whispers behind closed doors. Though it was Paul and the other apostles that were doing the preaching work (Ro 1:1, 5), for the disciple who heard and had the right heart "*the word*" was also in their mouth. (The "*we*" are the apostles, and the "*you*" are the disciples.)

(Romans 10:8-10) But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your own mouth and in your own heart"; that is, "the word" of faith, which *we* are preaching. ⁹ For if *you* publicly declare (confess) with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration (confession) for salvation.

Public Declaration

The original Greek words translated as "*publicly declare*" and "*public declaration*" mean to publicly confess, which means to admit or acknowledge something when confronted about it, typically against one's inclination. So publicly declaring "*that Jesus is Lord*" is not evangelizing. It is merely the opposite of being ashamed of and hiding or disowning (denying) your faith when challenged or questioned about it. (Mr 8:38)

(Matthew 10:32-33) "Everyone, then, who acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father who is in the heavens. ³³ But whoever disowns me before men, I will also disown him before my Father who is in the heavens. (Lu 12:8-9)

(Revelation 3:5) The one who conquers will thus be dressed in white garments, and I will by no means blot out his name from the book of life, but I will acknowledge his name before my Father and before his angels.

In Revelation, as in Matthew 10:32 and Luke 12:8, Michael is not evangelizing about them to Jehovah. He is merely acknowledging them. When we publicly acknowledge (confess) our belief in Jesus we may then be asked to explain why we believe what we believe. A public acknowledgement of our faith is not enough. We must also study and know the Bible well enough to always be ready and able to defend our faith.

(1 Peter 3:15) But sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone who demands of you a reason for the hope you have, but doing so with a mild temper and deep respect.

Example

The Bible gives us an example of "*public declaration*." Luke 3:15 tells us this:

(Luke 3:15) Now the people were in expectation and all of them were reasoning in their hearts about John, "May he perhaps be the Christ?"

The priests and Levites were also wondering if John was the Christ, so they sent men to ask him. Here is John's response:

(John 1:20) And he admitted it and did not deny it, saying: "I am not the Christ."

Do you notice the odd way that verse is written? It says that he "*did not deny it*", and then it quotes him denying it: "*I am not the Christ*." Do you know why that is? Because that verse is not about the denial, but is about the admission, that is to say, the "confession".

The original Greek word that John used was *hōmologēsen*, which is basically the same Greek word used at Romans 10:9 (*homologēsēs*). One meaning **confess**, the other **confession**.

When John was confronted and questioned he "*admitted*" (confessed), or as that word is translated at Romans 10:9, 10, he made "*public declaration*." The same Greek word at Matthew 10:32 and Luke 12:8 (*homologēsei*) is translated as "*acknowledges*," meaning "**will confess**".

These other scriptures also use those same Greek words:

(Acts 24:14) But I do admit this to you, that according to the way that they call a sect, in this manner I am rendering sacred service to the God of my forefathers, as I believe all the things set forth in the Law and written in the Prophets.

(Titus 1:16) They publicly declare that they know God, but they disown him by their works, because they are detestable and disobedient and not approved for good work of any sort.

(Hebrews 13:15) Through him let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips that make public declaration to his name.

(1 John 1:9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(1 John 2:23) Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father either. But whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

(1 John 4:15) Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is God's Son, God remains in union with such one and he in union with God.

Deny

The same Greek word used at John 1:20 for "*deny*" (arneomai) is also used at Matthew 26:34.

(Matthew 26:34) Jesus said to him: "Truly I say to you, on this night, before a rooster crows, you will disown (arneomai) me three times." (Lu 22:34)

Just as John provides us an example of "*public declaration*" at Luke 3:15 by admitting instead of denying Christ when he was questioned, Peter gives us three examples of failing to make "*public declaration*" by denying Christ three times when he was questioned. (Mt 26:69-75)

The term "*publically declare*" is helpful in that it points out that the declaration (confession) is a **public** one, and not a secret acknowledgement in your heart. (Ro 10:10)

Here are those same scriptures, but written with the true meaning of the original Greek word:

(Matthew 10:32-33) "Everyone, then, who (publicly confesses) me before men, I will also (publicly confess) him before my Father who is in the heavens.

(Luke 12:8, 9) "I say to you, everyone who (publicly confesses) me before men, the Son of man will also (publicly confess) him before the angels of God.

(John 1:20) And he (publicly confessed) it and did not deny it, saying: "I am not the Christ."

(Acts 24:14) But I do (publicly confess) this to you, that according to the way that they call a sect, in this manner I am rendering sacred service to the God of my forefathers, as I believe all the things set forth in the Law and written in the Prophets.

(Romans 10:9-10) For if you publicly (confess) with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public (confession) for salvation.

(Titus 1:16) They publicly (confess) that they know God, but they disown him by their works, because they are detestable and disobedient and not approved for good work of any sort.

(1 John 1:9) If we (publically) confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(1 John 2:23) Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father either. But whoever (publicly confesses) the Son has the Father also.

(1 John 4:15) Whoever (publicly confesses) that Jesus is God's Son, God remains in union with such one and he in union with God.

Why does accurate translation matter? Because it shows the difference between evangelizing and "*public declaration*". One is proactive, the other is reactive.

Here is what the NWT says about accurately translating the Bible:

[NWT p. 1720] Bible translation involves more than simply rendering an original-language word with the same term each time it occurs. A translator must use good judgment in order to select words in the target language that best represent the ideas of the original-language text. In addition, there is a need to structure the sentences in a way that conforms to the rules of grammar of the target language, making the text easy to read. At the same time, extremes in rewording the text must be avoided. A translator who liberally paraphrases the Bible according to how he interprets the overall idea could distort the meaning of the text. How so? The translator may erroneously insert his opinion of what the original text means or may omit important details contained in the original text. So while paraphrases of the Bible may be easy to read, their very freeness at times may prevent the reader from getting the true message of the text. Doctrinal bias can easily color a translator's work.

I think the translation to "*public declaration*" is an example of the NWT translators allowing "*doctrinal bias*" to color their translation work. An example of opinion based textual omission can be found at Genesis 9:5. (see my article "In God's Image") And an example of intentional mistranslation and adding to scripture in order to push an agenda can be found at 2 Corinthians 5:20. (see my article "The Holy Trinity (of worship)")

So when examined carefully (Ac 17:11) the Bible explains to us the difference between evangelizing and public declaration. Evangelizers seek out others to speak to, while those who make public declaration are responding to those who have sought them out.

And every time the evangelizing work is mentioned in the Bible it is *a/ways* directed at an anointed evangelizer or is a statement made by an anointed evangelizer who is referring to himself. (If you know of any exceptions, please let me know.)

House to House

JW publications make such statements as these about Acts 5:42 and 20:20.

[it-1 p. 1156] With the establishment of Christianity, preaching and teaching from house to house became a prominent part of true worship. (Acts 20:20)

[w22 p. 27] He (Paul) preached "publicly and from house to house." (Acts 20:20)

In the first century Christians met (congregated) in homes.

(Matthew 26:18) He said: "Go into the city to So-and-so and say to him, 'The Teacher says: "My appointed time is near; I will celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your home.'""

(Acts 2:2) Suddenly there was a noise from heaven, just like that of a rushing, stiff breeze, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

(Acts 12:12) After he realized this, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John who was called

Mark, where quite a few were gathered together and were praying.

(Acts 16:40) But they came out of the prison and went to the home of Lyd'i-a; and when they saw the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

(Romans 16:5) Also greet the congregation that is in their house. Greet my beloved E·pae'ne·tus, who is a firstfruits of Asia for Christ.

(1 Corinthians 16:19) The congregations of Asia send you their greetings. Aq'ui·la and Pris'ca together with the congregation that is in their house greet you heartily in the Lord.

(Colossians 4:15) Give my greetings to the brothers in La·o·di·ce'a and to Nym'pha and to the congregation at her house.

(Philemon 2) and to Ap'phi·a our sister, and to Ar·chip'pus our fellow soldier, and to the congregation that is in your house:

Now let's examine Acts 20:20 and the verses just before it. Take note who is being spoken to.

(Acts 20:17-20) However, from Mi·le'tus he sent word to Eph'e·sus and called for the elders of the congregation.¹⁸ When they came to him, he said to them: "You well know how I conducted myself among you from the first day I stepped into the province of Asia,¹⁹ slaving for the Lord with all humility and with tears and trials that befell me by the plots of the Jews,²⁰ while I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house.

First, note that Paul is teaching, not preaching. And who did Paul say he was teaching? That's right, the elders of the congregation.

And where did he teach those elders? Both in public and in private homes.

Why would he be teaching elders in homes? Because that is where the Christians congregated. That is to say, that is where the congregations met together.

So when verse 20 says that Paul taught the elders "*from house to house*", it means from congregation to congregation.

(Acts 5:42) And every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus.

Yes, they taught in the temple where the Jews gathered, and in the homes where the Christians gathered. They taught from congregation to congregation, like a traveling overseer (circuit overseer).

I suspect that these next two verses are talking about congregations as well.

(1 Corinthians 1:11) For some from the house of Chlo'e have informed me regarding you, my brothers, that there are dissensions among you.

(1 Timothy 5:13) At the same time they also learn to be unoccupied, going around from one house to another; yes, not only unoccupied but also gossipers and meddlers in other people's affairs, talking about things they should not.

So "house to house" is not talking about evangelizing.

=====

Here is what the translator notes for the 2001 Translation Bible say about it. (emphasis theirs)

Most Bibles translate Paul's words at Acts 20:20 (and similar words in Acts 5:42) as saying that he taught 'from house to house.' Yet, that is a mistranslation. The Greek words were actually, '*kat oikous*,' literally, 'according/to house.'

There is actually no mention in the Greek source text of moving between houses. The ancient Aramaic translation of Acts also makes no mention of it, simply saying 'in houses'.

Therefore, *The New Living Translation* says, 'in your homes.' *The Bible in Basic English* says 'and privately.'

We agree. Our translation of Acts 20:20 puts it this way:

'Yet I didn't fail to remind you and teach you both **in public and in [your] homes**'

You can see the rightness of this by looking at the entire setting, as laid out in verses 17 to 21:

'However, [while he was] in Miletus, he [Paul] sent word to Ephesus **to call the elders of the congregation to him**.

And when they arrived, he told them:

You know very well that from the first day I stepped into Asia, I was with you all along, humbly slaving for the Lord. And [you know] of all the tears and trials I endured because of the plots of the Jews.

Yet, I didn't fail to remind you and teach you both in public and in [your] homes; For I gave a thorough witness to both Jews and Greeks about [the need to] repent before God and [to have] faith in our Lord Jesus.

As you can see, Paul was speaking to Christian elders and reminding them of how he had preached

to them! This is not a description of an organized preaching campaign to strangers in which Christians would call at their homes.

Then, does this mean that Paul never searched for new converts by preaching from house to house? No, we're not saying that. It's hard to know everything about how the early Christians preached.

We're also not saying that calling at people's homes is wrong or forbidden, for the scriptures do not imply that either.

The only records in the Bible (in Acts and Paul's letters) are of speaking in public places like synagogues, auditoriums, and in local markets. Further, ancient sources outside of the Bible, such as the 1st century Didache, or early 2nd century Apology of Aristides and The Preaching of Peter, make no mention of house-to-house preaching campaigns.

Yet, we do know that when Jesus sent his Apostles out to do preaching, they went to nearby cities and spoke to strangers, and they usually stayed overnight in the homes of those who welcomed their message. At Luke 10:5-7 Jesus told them:

*'Then, as you enter each house you should say,
May this house have peace.*

And if a son of peace lives there, your peace will rest upon him; But if not, it will return to you.

So, stay in that house and eat and drink the things they provide, because a worker deserves his wages... **Don't keep moving from one house to another.'**

These latter words probably do not imply that house-to-house preaching is forbidden, for one has to understand the culture at the time. It likely implies that these preachers were to use one home as a base for preaching to the rest of the city, and that they should not move from home to home to take hospitality from different ones.

The Apostles likely used one home as a base from which to preach in public places, as described elsewhere in the Christian Bible.

So while the modern practice of house-to-house preaching (such as done by the Latter-Day Saints and the Jehovah's Witnesses) is not forbidden, as translators we are unaware of any part of the Bible that describes it or commands it.

source: <https://2001translation.org/notes/house-to-house>

=====

Conclusion

I think it would be better if the GB just asked for help in accomplishing their ministry. Perhaps something like this:

There are very few of the chosen ones left on earth. If it is something you could do, it would be very nice if you could help us fulfill our commission to evangelize.

It would be like back when the Israelites were asked for gold and silver to help those that were rebuilding the temple. They received so much from the people that they had to tell them to stop giving. (Ex 36:5,6)

I think the brothers and sisters would also feel better about themselves because they would be evangelizing because their "*heart impelled*" them (Ex 35:21; 36:2), and *not* because they were "*under compulsion*." (2Co 9:7)

And those who don't have that evangelizing gene (Eph 4:11), those who live quietly, mind their own business, and walk decently (1Th 4:11, 12) shouldn't be disheartened and driven out of the congregation by misplaced guilt and shame. Evangelizing is not their obligation.

If you are one who does not evangelize, know that Christ still loves you as a member of the body. (1Co 12:25-27; Col 2:18, 19) You may not evangelize, but you can still provide "*helpful services*." (1Co 12:28)

(Ephesians 4:16) From him all the body is harmoniously joined together and made to cooperate through every joint that gives what is needed. When each respective member functions properly, this contributes to the growth of the body as it builds itself up in love.

"The body is made up not of one member." (1Co 12:14) Only "*some*" are evangelizers. (Eph 4:11)

Christendom's threat is eternal torment in Hell if their congregations don't do as they are told. The GB say you won't "*survive the coming destruction*" if you don't evangelize ("*support Christ's brothers loyally*"). [rr p. 178 ¶17] Both are false statements.

What do *you* think?

:^)

Dave

da.getmyip@gmail.com

<http://da.getmyip.com/PDF/Ramblings>

Last updated: 03-08-2024

(Date created:08-09-2020)