

# Leadership in the Third Millennium

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- [ 0 : 00 ] As we sit, let's pray together. Let's pray. The Mighty One, God the Lord, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.
- Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth. Lord, as we gather together this evening, in the beauty of the sunlight that streams into this room, we are reminded of the beauty of the sunlight that is eternal, that shines into our lives, in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, your beloved Son, in whom we are called to participate, to be partakers in your divine glory.
- How we thank you, Lord, for the greatness of your grace and your love. How we thank you for your promise given at the very beginning of man's existence and fulfilled so gloriously in the coming of Jesus to be our great victor, our Savior, the triumphant one who rescues us out of a kingdom of darkness and has transferred us, transplanted us into the kingdom of the Son of your love.
- And so, Lord, we gather this evening as the people of the God of Abraham, as the people of our Lord Jesus Christ, who are one in him.
- And as we meet together, Lord, celebrating this partnership in the gospel that we have here in this city and in the west of Scotland, we thank you for the true bonds of fellowship, of communion, that there are in your spirit.
- [ 1 : 49 ] We who name the name of Jesus are one and shall be forever. So we thank you that this evening is an opportunity to bear witness, glad testimony to that truth.
- We ask that you would be in our midst, to open our eyes and our hearts to you and to one another, and to encourage us in the work of the gospel here in this small part of the Lord's vineyard.
- So be with us, we pray. Encourage us. Keep us awake on this warm evening. And send us home, we pray, with much to bless our hearts, because we ask it in Jesus Christ, our Savior's name.
- Amen. Amen. Well, as I said, this evening is a meeting under the auspices of the West of Scotland Gospel Partnership. And two of the core group who helped to organize this are going to come briefly and just let us know, to remind some of us, to tell others for the first time, just what this is all about, why are we having this partnership, who's involved, and what's it all about.
- So first of all, Andy Gemmel and then Craig Dyer are going to come and speak to us. Andy. Brief is the key word, because this is a very warm evening indeed, and we need our resources to stay awake for the whole thing.
- [ 3 : 11 ] Can we have the first slide up, please? Why have a West of Scotland Gospel Partnership? I want to say three things about this.
- First, the gospel is big. Any Christian that acknowledges that Jesus is Lord knows that that Lordship involves the whole of the world. Any church that acknowledges that Jesus is Lord knows that they have interests and responsibilities beyond their immediate locality.

The gospel gives us a big vision automatically because Jesus is Lord of everything. However, our churches are small. We have limited resources, limited people, limited gifts, limited money, limited time.

One congregation cannot possibly reach the whole of a region for the gospel. But together, we can share things in order to enable us to do more than we could do on our own.

One sees this right from the beginning of the New Testament with churches, sharing money, sharing workers, and so on for the advance of the gospel. We also have shared responsibility.

[ 4 : 24 ] One congregation does not have responsibility for the whole of the region. But if the responsibility for the advance of the gospel in a region does not lie with all the churches in that region, where does it lie?

Why have a gospel partnership? Because the gospel is big. Individually, our churches are small, but we have real responsibilities for the region. Can I have the next one, please? Who?

Who's it for? Well, first of all, for anyone who's committed to gospel truth. We, as a partnership, confess the historic Christian faith.

We have a doctrinal basis which confesses that, which we think any Bible-believing Christian can wholeheartedly agree to. It's a non-denominational confession of faith, so we think it'll fit churches from all sorts of different backgrounds who share the same biblical convictions.

But more than that, it's those who are committed to gospel growth, the advance of the gospel. We do not want to be a club that people belong to, but a partnership that works together for gospel advance.

[ 5 : 32 ] Third, those committed to gospel unity. True Christians and true churches are united under the lordship of Jesus.

There is a great need now and in every age for expressions of that unity in churches working together for the gospel advance. That's why, and that's who I'm going to hand over to Craig, who's going to say a little bit about how.

Craig, thanks Andy. Good evening, everyone. So Andy and Willie and I are three of the team on the core team of the partnership. There are three who are unable to be with us tonight because they're gospel guys involved in gospel work.

So Scott is running a Bible study. Scott Hamilton of Harvest Bible Chapel. Andy Hunter of FIEC in Greenview Evangelical is out preaching in Lanarkshire. And our senior pastor, Alan McKnight, he may be on a hospital visit, but he's been here all week and he'll be here again tomorrow.

But his excuse is that his wife is in Moldova, his son's about to fly off to New York, and his daughter's having a baby tomorrow. So he's probably rocking himself to sleep in a darkened room at this point.

[ 6 : 44 ] And who can blame him? So it's been a real thrill just to see this develop. And we're so grateful to God for the joy of this interdependency that we have together.

It's not a club. It's not in any way an elitist thing, as Andy has explained. It's a partnership of gospel churches who want to see the gospel strengthened and worked out in practical ways.

And there are three of them, as you'll see in the last slide. Number one, we want to focus on mission. We want to look for opportunities together, strategic opportunities, where we can engage with the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus in the west of Scotland.

So we're going to be working on that. That may well involve the thrilling thought of church planting, new churches being planted that can embody the gospel and carry the gospel forth.

And you can imagine that there will be many situations where working together cooperatively would be better than trying to do it independently. And then in fellowship and prayer is an obvious way for us to work together, to provide a forum, a network for churches to pray for each other, to pray intelligently, supportively, and for the church leaders, the pastors and the elders to be encouraged because we're all facing the same joys and the same sorrows, the same thrills and the same battles.

[ 8 : 03 ] So to be able to encourage one another and stand together. Sunday night was such a thrill for me. I think the first time ever having been in independent evangelical churches all my life to be called a presbyter and to love the feeling just as that was explained from the word of God.

Such a joy to be part of that. And Lord, may there be more of that in all of our churches as we see life's being touched and moved and people coming into the work of the gospel. There will also be obviously opportunity for informal intercongregational fellowship and events.

Especially with the young people and we want to continue to do that. Third thing is training. To facilitate shared training opportunities and events. And in time to cooperate with placing and developing trainees for the work of the gospel.

So lots of really exciting things to be praying for and to be looking to God to bless. Thank you so much. I'm handing over to John who's going to tell us about some great gospel resources.

Good evening everyone. Welcome to Florida. That's where I come from if you didn't know. So looking at you, you're wilted and hot and complaining.

[ 9 : 21 ] This is cool to me. There's a nice breeze in here. Every time you sing, there's a nice cool breeze that walks through the room. If you all do like this, you'll feel a lot better. Okay.

Really, I hope you can make it through. I'm going to be just fine up here. In fact, I just took my jacket off just so that you would not feel uncomfortable watching. Okay. I am very glad to be with you for this wonderful event tonight.

I don't know if you know why we're here, but try to recall what the people who are up here were talking about. About the West Scotland Partnership. Yeah. Okay. West Scotland Partnership.

Gospel Partnership. Thank you. I knew I knew that. West Scotland Gospel Partnership. That's what it's all about. Because what we're going to try to answer right at this moment is, why in the world would you start something else that's new?

You have a Bible? You were given one on the way in. First Corinthians chapter 9. First Corinthians chapter 9. And if you have a church Bible, it's on page 500, pardon me, 957.

[ 10 : 29 ] 957. Let me read to you from 1 Chronicles chapter 9, beginning in verse 19. If you are familiar with the Bible, you've heard this passage before.

Page 957, beginning in verse 19. Hear now the word of God. For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

To the Jews I became as a Jew in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law, though not being myself under the law, that I might win those under the law.

To those outside the law I became as one outside the law, not being outside the law of God, but under the law of Christ, that I might win those outside the law.

To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel that I may share with them in its blessings.

[ 11 : 36 ] Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, these are words from your apostle. We turn to you, calling you our teacher, putting our hope in you, and asking you now to send Holy Spirit to us, that he may open our eyes and soften our hearts, that we may hear, see your truth, hear you speak, love you more dearly, serve you more faithfully, because of this, your word.

And as you do it, we promise you that we will give you the praise, and we will give you the glory for it. Amen. You know, sometimes, if you've traveled, you'll know this is true, sometimes when you go to another country, things are so different, you know immediately after getting off the airplane that you're in a strange place.

I can remember that happening to me in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. I got off the plane, out on the tarmac, out on the runway, and there in the middle of the runway, between me and the terminal, was a cow.

Well, that was bad enough. But when I worked to the right to go around him, he went with me to the right to block me. Then I came back and he blocked me again, back and forth, back and forth, for what seemed like an hour or two.

It wasn't that long, but it seemed that way, until two guys came out from the terminal, wrestled this cow down, and pulled him off the runway. That was a different place, and I knew it right away.

[ 12 : 59 ] When you go to a place that's that different, you're not shocked by anything except the fact that it's so different from here. Okay. Now, there are other places where you can go that are different, but they're deceptive, because they're close enough to home that you feel like you're in the same place.

And for an American, and probably for you too, one of those places would be Australia. And I can remember one time in Melbourne, Australia, out, ready to take a run. I had earphones in my ears, and I was listening to the radio, which sounded just like American radio, and I'm doing okay.

It's hot like this, and I'm running along. You have to stretch the word run to cover me. But I'm running along, and I notice off in the distance there's a lorry coming toward me, so I decide because I'm so slow, it's time to go ahead and go across the street.

So I do, but I go about halfway across and sort of take my time, keep on running. The lorry's coming, and he starts blowing his horn at me. Ah, ah, ah, like this. And I'm thinking, man, that is a loud horn, because he is at least 100 yards away from me.

And I'm thinking, man, what kind of horn do you have on that truck? And then suddenly, a little bird whispered in my ear, that's not the truck. And I look behind myself, and there was a Mack truck coming down on me, maybe as far as from here to that wall there, and he nearly ran right over me.

[ 14 : 18 ] Now, you know why, don't you? I'm an American, and you guys drive on the wrong side of the road. I mean, why do you think down in London town, they have all over the side, the streets, look right, look right?

Because what we do is we look left, go out into the road, then look right. Here, if you do that, you get run over. Okay. Well, that's true when you go from place to place to place to place.

And in many respects, that's what the Apostle Paul is talking about here. He's talking about how when he goes here, when he goes there, this is what he does, this is what he does, this is what he does. But while that's true when you go to different places, it's also true especially when you stay in the same place and things change around you in the same place.

Some changes are so dramatic, you can't miss them. If we were to have another world war, you would be in the middle of it, you would not miss it. But the reality is most cultural changes, most changes in a country don't happen like that.

They happen very slowly. And because they happen so slowly, we think, well, that's not so bad. And we accommodate it.

[ 15 : 34 ] Well, that's not so bad. And we accommodate a little more. And that's not so bad. And we just keep on accommodating, little baby step after little baby step, until suddenly we realize the Mack truck is about to run over us.

Welcome to Scotland. Because that's where you are today. I'm not like Chicken Little. You know Chicken Little?

The sky is falling. The sky is falling. If I had said this to you 30 years ago, that's what you would have said to me. You say, oh, you're like Chicken Little. You're producing all these crazy ideas that things are so different, and things are desperate.

We're in a crisis. But the reality is, that's not what I'm doing. In fact, you know as well as I do, those of you who are 40 years and older, you know that slowly and slowly and slowly, in the last 30 years, things have just changed and changed and changed and changed.

That now, if you watch the news in Scotland, you can hardly recognize your country anymore. Say amen somebody. You see what I'm saying to you? This is serious now.

[ 16 : 45 ] This is not Chicken Little talking. This is someone who's watched it for 30 years. This is someone speaking to you tonight who is now noticing in such dramatic ways that if we do not address the changes in our countries, both yours and mine, dramatically, then woe be to us.

Because surely, our children, and our grandchildren, and our great-grandchildren, will pay the price for it. So if you don't care about yourself, if you don't care about Scotland, if you don't even care about Jesus, care about your children, your grandchildren, and your great-grandchildren, at least for tonight.

And consider what it means to be a leader of the church, the church of Jesus, in a place that has changed like that, to the point now that business as usual just will not work anymore.

Are you ready for a change? Are you ready to address the changes that are around you? Well, here in this passage, the Apostle Paul is talking about how changes occurred as he went from one group to another, to another, to another, and how he managed those kinds of changes.

Those were probably rather abrupt for him. But what we're going to do is ask, how can we learn lessons from his ability to change, from place to place to place, as we just sit here in the same place?

[ 18 : 18 ] And now, finally, we realize things really have changed that much, and we need to do something about it. Now, I don't know, if you're driving down the road, and if there's a sign in the road and it says to you there's a hole in the road, you usually slow down, don't you, and watch for it and go around it?

You normally don't drive into a hole in the road if there's a sign warning you. Well, the unfortunate thing about this is the Apostle Paul is about to tell us about some holes in the road.

And the sad thing is is that there are no signs warning you and saying to you, watch out for this hole, watch out for this hole, because we already have fallen into them. But maybe if we can identify the holes, we can pull ourselves out and get moving and watch for them in the future.

The first hole that will keep you from becoming the kind of leader the Church of Jesus Christ needs in Scotland today is that you will maximize, you'll continue to maximize your personal freedom.

Listen to what the Apostle says in verse 19. For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all that I may win more of them.

[ 19 : 31 ] When the Apostle Paul says here, I am free though I am free, he was referring to the fact that he was born a Roman citizen, a free Roman citizen. You could purchase that in his day, but he was born a Roman citizen.

Now, do you know what that meant? It meant he was much like a Scot. It meant he could go anywhere in the Roman Empire that he wanted to. And if he came to a roadblock where soldiers were, all he had to do was say, I'm a citizen of Rome, they would say, go right ahead.

Now, that meant for the Apostle Paul in his day that he could have spent his entire life, his entire life, on the French Riviera, selling falafels and things like that.

He could have been a beach bum his whole life and no one would have had any right to say to him, you can't do that. That's irresponsible. Had they done so, he would have said, I'm a free Roman citizen.

I belong to no one. I can do with my life just like I want to do with my life. Now, I know you to know enough, especially if you come from the Highlands, I know you well enough to know that you cherish something very big in your life as a people.

[ 20 : 42 ] And what is that thing? It is your freedom. Your freedom. It's sort of in your blood, isn't it? It's in American blood too.

It's in our DNA. That one of the most important values in all of life is that every single person, every individual, needs the right and has the right to maximize his or her personal freedom.

As long as you don't step on anyone else, you can do exactly what you want to with your life. Don't ever raise any questions about my life. In fact, Americans are so crazy about this freedom thing that we think it's a God-given right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

So much so that when 9-11 occurred in New York, do you know what our president said? Do you know why he said they attacked us? Why they blew up that building, they brought it down to the ground?

His number one answer was very simple as far as he was concerned. They hate our freedom. And I'm saying, what are you talking about?

[ 21 : 53 ] They could not care less about our freedom. That is our agenda. That is what's important to you and to me. That is our heritage, individual, personal freedom.

So Paul had that too. But as a leader in his day, he understood that in order for the church of Jesus Christ to go forward and not fall back, for the church of Jesus Christ to move against the kingdom of darkness, the leaders of the church of Jesus Christ had to give up their personal freedom.

It's really that simple. Now you say, of course he believed that. Because everyone who comes to Jesus calls him their Lord. And they become servants of the Lord Jesus.

Right? And everybody, yeah, that's right. I'm going to serve the Lord Jesus. But that's not what he talks about in this passage. Did you notice that? He did not say, though I am free and belong to no man, I become a servant of Jesus.

That is not what he said. What he said is, though I am free and belong to no man, I become a servant of all.

[ 23 : 05 ] People. Ordinary people. He became a servant as a servant of Jesus to ordinary people around him.

And not just one or two, but everybody he met. He had the attitude, I am that person's servant. Now that is radical leadership.

Here is the reality of it. The Apostle Paul faced what many of us are facing in our own neighborhoods. I don't know what yours is like, but I can tell you about mine. My neighborhood is the kind of neighborhood that 30 years ago in the United States is a gated community.

And you would have had one kind of people in that neighborhood and one kind of people only. And they would have all been like me. And they would have all been like my wife. And they would have all had two and a half children and a dog.

And we would have all driven two cars and put them in our three car garages. And we had all been one big happy family in that gated community. But do you know something? We are the only family in that whole community that looks like me and my wife.

[ 24 : 07 ] It's the most amazing thing in the world. We have people from other nations, people who speak other languages, people who make gender decisions I wouldn't make. All around us.

And so what does that tend to do even in our own neighborhoods? It tends to make us isolated from everybody around us. Have you noticed that beginning to happen in your own neighborhood?

That whereas 20 years ago, those of you who can remember back that far, you might have walked down the street and said, hi, hey, how's it going? What are you doing? What's up? Top of the morning to you. Because people were like you. But now you walk down the street afraid that the people who are not like you are going to attack you and rob you.

That's the world the Apostle Paul faced too. People all around him who didn't like what he believed, didn't like what he said, didn't like what he was doing.

But what did he do? He became their servant. Now you may say to me, Richard, why would I ever want to do that? You know, the reality is this. Think about our Lord Jesus for just a moment and think about how he became your servant and how he became we call him Lord because he gave up his personal freedom to serve you and me.

[ 25 : 27 ] And that reality becomes our model because the way of life, the way of faith, the way of hope is that the leaders of God's people will imitate the Lord Jesus and become a servant of all.

What does that actually mean? It means the leaders of God's people today now need to start caring about the people around them. Yes, the ones who are like us, but even the ones that are not like us.

I told the students here earlier this week that you can tell a Christian from a non-Christian in my neighborhood because the Christians will smile and wave as they're hitting the garage door button so they can hurry up into their house and not have to talk to you.

The unbelievers just look down and hit the button. But we wave and smile, act real nice, and hit that garage door button so many times that we can get in here and don't have to talk to those people. So live your private life.

Continue to live as it's comfortable for you. Elders of the church, continue to live your own private life and maximize your personal freedom. Don't even ask the question, should I go fishing or not?

[ 26 : 35 ] Should I go hiking and walking up in the hills or not? Don't even ask those kinds of questions. I mean, go ahead, keep on doing that because that's what we have been doing for the last 30 years and you see where that has gotten us.

Don't ask the question, what should I do with my money? Because it belongs to me. I worked hard for my money. It belongs to me. Don't ask the question, does the kingdom of God need something special for me?

Don't ask that question. Maximize your personal freedom. We've been doing it for 30 years and you see where it's gotten us and you can see where it's going to. Yes, you are free.

But the apostle says, though I am free and belong to no one, I became a slave of everyone. Today, the West Scotland Gospel Coalition, partnership, thank you, somewhere is on my brain here, partnership is something that is going to happen in this part of your country that's going to require the leaders of the Church of Jesus to give up their personal freedom.

Do you think that Willie just doesn't have anything to do? Do you think the other pastors that are going to be involved in this are just running out of things? No, of course not. They're going to have to sacrifice even more of their personal freedom to make this happen, even more than they already do.

[ 28 : 05 ] But I want to tell you this as plainly as I possibly can. They cannot do this alone. They need you to be willing to go to that meeting when you could be watching television.

They need you to care about people that go to other denominations, other churches, enough to meet with them. They need you to be praying with those people as well. They need you to establish new churches.

They need you to join in. And that will require you not maximizing your personal freedom. It's a hole that we've all fallen into.

It's time to get out. There's a second hole in the road to dealing with a changed culture. And it's right here in this passage. Listen to what he says beginning in verse 20.

To the Jews I became as a Jew in order to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law. Now look at verse 21. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law that I might win those outside the law.

[ 29 : 12 ] To the weak I became weak that I might win the weak. I've become all things to all people. If there were a word here that I think is our hole that we fall into it's not just giving not giving up personal freedom but it is the hole the danger the hindrance of inflexibility.

Inflexibility. I want you to think about what the apostle just said in this passage. Remember he was a Jew. And so when he talks about the fact that when he's with the Jews he behaves like a Jew he knew what that meant.

What he could eat what he could not eat what he could touch what he could not touch. But this is a man who knew very clearly that he was on his way to eternal judgment because of the practices of the Jews.

And when he came to Jesus Jesus set him free from those practices. And yet he says when I'm with the Jews I am flexible enough to behave like one of them.

And then the apostle says here that when he's with Gentiles pagan dogs like you and me who don't know any better that he can behave like them too.

[ 30 : 26 ] He can dress like them. He can eat what they eat. He can talk like they talk. All those kinds of things. And remember this is a man whose mother told him from birth don't act like a Gentile. Don't talk like a Gentile.

Don't touch the things that Gentiles touch. Don't do the things Gentiles do. Because those are evil. Those are against God. But here is the apostle Paul saying when I'm with one group I can go this way.



When I'm with the other group I can go that way. And that's just the opposite of what you and I think we need in a world that's changed around us. Because what we think is that the way to stand up for Jesus is to put our feet on the ground like this and bear down and absolutely refuse to be flexible about anything.

Because that's a Christian with conviction. I have a friend who teaches in a Christian college that's up on top of a mountain in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Maybe some of you have ever been there. You will know what I'm talking about. One day I visited him. He's in a woods and it's on the ridge of a mountain. And the day before I didn't know this but a tornado had come over the ridge and into his front garden and had knocked down some trees.

[ 31 : 42 ] I didn't even know what had happened. I just pulled in to say hi to him and there were a bunch of people sawing up trees and pulling them out of his house because the trees had collapsed onto his house. So it was very traumatic really in many respects for the whole family.

These two trees that had been thrown into the house were large oak trees. The diameter of these trees' trunks was about this big I guess. About that big. Pretty substantial trees.

But the tornado had come through and it just lifted them out of the ground and threw them over into the house. It was amazing. And as we stood there he said you can tell where the tornado came over the ridge right there and you could.

You could look into the forest and you could see the path of the tornado because lots of other trees had fallen down too. But remember this is a day and a half later after the tornado there were some trees in that path where the tornado had come that were standing tall as if nothing had happened.

Not the oak trees mind you but the pine trees. And you know why. It's because when the tornado came the pine trees said oh you want me to go that way?

[ 32 : 48 ] Okay fine with me. You want me to go that way? Fine with me. Fine with me. Yeah I can do this. This is fine. Go ahead. Blow all you want to. I don't care. You're not pulling me out of the ground. But when the oak trees saw the tornado come they stood there like this and said give me your best shot.

And it did. Lifted them right out of the ground and threw them to the side. There it is. You see you think you can stay rooted in the truth of Jesus by being inflexible. By doing it the way you've always done it.

By doing exactly what your father and your mother did. What you've done for the last 25 years. But the reality is is that when you bear down like that and the winds of change come to a culture like they've come to yours those winds of change will pick you up and throw you to the side and say we don't even know you exist anymore.

Now you can imagine can't you? Before the tornado came the conversations between the pine trees and the oak trees can you imagine that conversation? The oak trees look at the pine trees and say you wimps.

You don't have any convictions at all. I mean you'll just go any way you want. I mean why don't you stand up get some convictions believe in something for crying out loud. They would laugh at those pine trees silly things.

[ 33 : 57 ] But after the tornado came through who was crying? Who was laughing? It was the pine trees who were standing tall. The oak trees had been destroyed. That's what the apostle Paul is saying about his life.

He says I'm going to stay rooted in this thing called the good news of Jesus. We would add to this I'm going to stand rooted and I'm going to stay in the word of God and be faithful to the word of God.

But when the winds of change come the way to stay rooted in the gospel the way to stay rooted in the word of God is not to bear down with every conviction you've developed over the last 30 years rather is to learn like the pine tree to bend and to move because then your roots stay rooted.

Now I want you to notice in this passage the apostle Paul puts limits on how flexible he will be. Did you notice that? There's two parenthetical statements in here. He says when I'm with people who are under the law with the Jews he says I behave like one under the law but then he says but I'm not under the law.

And then he says when I'm with people who are without the law I behave like people without the law but I'm not without the law because I have the law of God in Christ. Don't worry. So he's saying yeah I'm going to be flexible I'll bend like this but I'm not going to do one thing and that is for the sake of flexibility I'm not going to turn against my God.

[ 35 : 28 ] I'm not going to turn against his word. I'm not going to turn against the Lord Jesus. I'm not going to leave them because that's my only hope my only life is in the Lord Jesus.

But he said apart from that it's okay with me I can bend with the wind. What I want you to notice most importantly here is that the limits that Paul sets on his flexibility they were not what was convenient.

it would have been convenient for him to ignore everyone around him. He didn't do it. The limits on his flexibility were not what made him comfortable and made him uncomfortable.

He was uncomfortable everywhere he went. So he wasn't limiting his flexibility by convenience or by comfort. Rather he was limiting his flexibility solely by the word of God.

Now one of the greatest challenges that the West Scotland Gospel Partnership faces is that if you're going to spread the good news of Jesus to Scotland it's going to require workers.

[ 36 : 47 ] It's going to require ministers of the gospel and pastors of churches and it's going to require therefore a new way of developing and raising up pastors of the church of Jesus.

It will feel uncomfortable to many of you because for your whole life the way you got a pastor was you sent a letter off somewhere and somebody sent some stranger to you and you say well we kind of like him okay give him a shot.

But now it's not going to be that way anymore God willing if you'll get behind it because what's needed now is for West Scotland to raise up Western Scottish leaders and it's time for you to take this as your mission to raise up young men to lead the church of Jesus Christ right here right now in ways that's never been done before here.

You have a great opportunity because you're not starting from the very beginning. There's this thing here I don't know if you know this there's this thing here called Corn Hill do you know about that? It's basically a school for training leaders and then in addition to that this church has what they call pastoral theological center what is it?

Pastor that's right pastoral theological course okay which is in addition to Corn Hill and in that program which is very difficult to perform very difficult to pull off taking a lot of time from a lot of people you are beginning to raise up your own leaders and last Sunday night we had one of the most magnificent events that this church has had a long time is that right?

[ 38 : 21 ] When Rupert was ordained here in this church as a result of having worked with you for years and having gone through the Corn Hill system and the PTC system you see what Scotland needs what Western Scotland needs is more Christian leaders not one not two not three but more Christian leaders because this area of Scotland is without the kinds of gospel believing gospel preaching bible believing leaders that it needs and for you to be able to do that you're going to have to become flexible can you do it?

I taught in theological seminary or theological college in the United States for 26 years and after 23 of those years the Lord put on my heart that it was time to stop doing the training of pastors the way we've always done it in the United States much like what you've done send them off to some school somewhere let them sit in front of some boring professor who doesn't know anything about ministry let them teach them Hebrew and Greek and all kinds of exotic things like that and then take them and give them to you so they can abuse you for a few years that was theological education in my country it's what theological education is in Scotland also it's traditional it's the way we've always done it my mother my father my grandmother my grandfather that's what they did well you can be like the oak tree if you want to and continue to dig your heels in and say we're not going to do it any differently than we've ever done it before and what will happen is the winds will come and they'll lift you out of the ground and just throw you to the side but the churches here who decide in their lay leadership among their elders and their other leaders in the church when they decide you know what we're going to do we're going to participate we're going to participate by having interns in our churches people who have access to ministry

I know your church has never had more than one minister right well the day has changed for that now what you need to have is a young minister there along with the old guy and that young minister is in some kind of training system while he's working with you and then you'll develop and grow the kind of leader that western Scotland needs so hear what the apostle Paul says I didn't fall into the hole of inflexibility you and I must not fall into the hole of inflexibility either but now the third hole look at verse 23 I do it all I do all of these things for the sake of the gospel that I may share with them in its blessing throughout this whole passage the apostle Paul said something over and over and over again did you catch it when we read it before look again at verse 19 that I might win more of them verse 20 at the end that I might win those under the law verse 21 that I might win those outside the law verse 22 that by all means I might save some

I do it all for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings the apostle Paul was what we used to call in the old days a soul winner he cared about people so much that he wanted to see them come to Jesus in large numbers so that everywhere he went he did his very best to win to win some to win some to win some to win some more to win some more to win some more so he could share in the blessing of the gospel spreading to the ends of the earth now if you're here tonight in this church you're probably in a church or you have mentalities where you say to yourself you know it's other denominations other churches that talk about numbers why are you talking about numbers tonight well I'm talking about how many people are coming to Christ because from the very beginning in Genesis chapter 1 all the way to the end of the Bible in Revelation it's about numbers more and more and more and in this passage it's about numbers that I may win that I may win that I may win that I may win so here's the question for you do you think Scotland can change if there are still just a handful of Christians here in my country

Christians often think that if they just vote for the right politician that it will turn the country around it's not true why is it that my country has taken this nosedive into the abyss it's because there are fewer and fewer and fewer and fewer faithful followers of Christ in my country electing a different president electing a different member of parliament electing a new prime minister whatever it may be whatever your choice may be independence or no independence whatever it is okay that's not going to solve the problem because the problem is not politics the problem is the fact that there are fewer and fewer and fewer and fewer and fewer followers of Jesus in Scotland as well the country that once was the sending missionary country of the world that had missionaries going everywhere there are fewer and fewer and fewer and fewer and fewer of us and how do you reverse that there's only one way for there to be more and more and more and more and more followers of Jesus so you know what that means don't you for every single person in this room that means you no longer get to maximize your personal freedom you no longer get to just behave the way you want to behave now your mission is very clear you know that next door neighbor that you avoid looking at she's your mission next time you have a barbecue in your back garden rather than inviting just all your church friends invite somebody that doesn't go to church imagine such a thing as that

[ 44 : 42 ] I know I don't want to do it either okay I want to live my private life too and I want to be inflexible and not have to change too but the reality is is that I love Jesus I want to see more people come to Jesus and it's my job to make that happen and if that's true for all of us in this room just imagine how true that is for the leaders are you an elder in the church you just simply no longer have the right to ignore people around you your job as an elder in Scotland is to bring people to Jesus you want to train pastors that will turn Scotland around that will present the good news and Bible teaching all through this nation again then what we must have is young men who are trained so that they love to do evangelism that it is in their blood and that will not come from traditional theological education it will only come from the kind of thing that's beginning to happen right here in your city you see it's true things can change slowly enough that you think you're basically in the same place as you were a while back and if you think that way like I did in Melbourne, Australia what happens to you is you get run over by a truck well don't be run over by the truck understand now

Scotland has changed and not for the better and who are going to be the instruments of change to bring it to where it needs to be a God honoring Christ honoring place in this world you avoid the hole avoid the hole of maximizing your personal freedom of inflexibility and of a small vision that no longer cares about seeing more and more and more and Jesus will bless that and he will honor you for it let's pray together our Lord Jesus we adore you thank you so much that you came here and served us make us servants like you thank you so much Jesus that you are not inflexible with us but you bend while staying rooted in the word of your father thank you Lord Jesus that you came to this place to win more and more and more

Holy Spirit we see these things in the words of Paul we see these things in the life of Jesus but we say to you we simply cannot do this in our power it's fine to have an organization it's fine to have a partnership it's fine to have meetings it's fine to talk about it but we simply cannot do it in our own power so Holy Spirit of God we are giving ourselves to you now we are asking you this very evening to come here in this place and to fill the hearts of the church's leaders here tonight to give us a vision for what can be and the determination to see it done Holy Spirit our prayer is very simple make us like Jesus

Amen Amen amen amen let's get for it to have a vision with Mum