

Biblical View of Results: Purpose Driven Mission

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Introduction

The theme, 'Christian communities in contemporary contexts,' from Edinburgh 2010, is very interesting and one that brings in new thinking for biblical studies. This paper will focus on the sub theme of 'purpose driven mission' as a tool for the church in Africa and elsewhere today. The concept of results has been largely left to the business world and most recently the NGO world has joined in due to demands by the donor community for accountability. However, as we reflect on lessons learnt since the 1910 Edinburgh conference, as we understand how we are to do missions in the 21st century, we find that the African church, in its core business of missions, has not been consistently purpose driven – asking for tangible results. The definition of 'results': the effects or consequences of an action.

The research will address five basic questions. 1) What role did results play in Jesus' and the apostles' thinking and practice? 2) What results did the apostles hope to accomplish? 3) How did they know when they got the results they wanted? 4) What did they do when the results did not match their expectations? 5) What did they do when they got what they wanted?

This article will probe Paul's epistle to the Philippians using the five basic research questions and hopefully bring out what might be termed 'a biblical view of results' that would propel a purpose driven mission agenda. The appropriateness of the epistle to the Philippians for such a study is based on the fact that the apostle Paul wrote it after his mission at Philippi and therefore the letter will reflect either negative or positive results of such a mission. The epistle to the Philippians cannot provide all the details of Paul's mission in Philippi since its intention is not to provide historical data. Therefore to supplement it the narrative in the book of Acts will be consulted.

It is useful to mention some working presuppositions at this point. This paper presupposes that the apostle Paul authored the epistle to the Philippians and that one of the purposes for its authorship was to provide an appraisal of his mission at Philippi.¹ Also it is assumed that this epistle is written to a church at

¹ See the following commentaries for introductory discussions: Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, WBC. (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983); Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); Moisés Silva, *Philippians, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992).

Philippi, a city mentioned in the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles.² The believers addressed are, therefore, the same ones that Paul had ministered to during his second (Acts 16:6-40) and third (Acts 20:1-6) missionary journeys.

The Church at Philippi: Historical Sketch (Acts 16:6-40; 20:1-2; 20:3-6)

This historical sketch will trace the movement of Paul and his missionary team at Philippi during his second and third missionary journeys. Such a sketch is important if we are going to establish the results implied in the Philippians epistle, since it is in the narrative of Acts that we discover what was really done at Philippi.

The First Ministry at Philippi – Acts 16:6-40

The visit of Paul and his team at Philippi receives much more space in the second missionary journey account than that of any other city, even though the visit itself seems to be very brief. The narrator of Acts may have had a vested interest here, since he seems to be an eyewitness. The 'we' passages stop at Philippi and then resume during the second visit there (20:1-15). This extensive attention is very helpful for our quest, since we are able to trace in rather minute detail the ministry of Paul at Philippi.

There are seven events that we will recount in an attempt to capture the thinking and actions of Paul that produce the results we see in Philippians.

1. The Macedonian Call – Acts 16:6-12
2. The Conversion of Lydia – Acts 16:13-15
3. The Encounter with a Slave-girl – Acts 16:16-18
4. The Philippian Imprisonment – Acts 16:19-28
5. The Conversion of the Philippian Jailer – Acts 16:29-34
6. The Release from Prison – Acts 16:35-39
7. The Departure from Philippi – Acts 16:40

1. The Macedonian Call – Acts 16:6-12

The narrative leading to the Macedonian call begins with the missionaries being forbidden to preach the word of God in Asia. The narrator does not say why the Holy Spirit forbade them from speaking the word in Asia, but this may have paved the way for the Philippian visit. Although the mode the Holy Spirit used in communicating this directive is not given, we may assume that Silas had a part to play in it, since he was a prophet (Acts 15:32).³ Paul and his team were not on their own, God played an important role in their mission.

² The city of Philippi will be discussed below.

³ Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts, Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 253.

Now that God had clearly forbidden them from preaching in Asia, Paul and his team attempted to enter Bithynia. Once again God, this time through the Spirit of Jesus, did not permit them to go there either (Acts 16:7).

One thing that stands out in these two prohibitions is that there was a clear communication between Paul and God, so that God closely monitored where Paul went and what he did. One might conclude at this early stage that Paul's thinking was constantly under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus the results of his actions are tied to God's will. The challenge that proceeds from such thinking is this: who is responsible for the results, God or Paul? The answer to this question will become clear in the discussion of the Philippian epistle.

Not knowing where God wanted them to go next, the team decided to go to the city port of Troas via Mysia (Acts 16:8). Up until this point, the narrative is in the third person, and even the events of the Macedonian vision are described in the third person. The narrator changes to the first person plural for the first time in the narrative of Acts after Paul saw the vision (Acts 16:10), which strongly suggests that the narrator had now joined the missionary team at Troas. Scholars suggest that Luke, who is assumed to have been a resident of Philippi, had met the missionary team at Troas, and consequently had briefed them concerning the state of Macedonia and the need to evangelise that part of the world.⁴ This assumption does help to explain how Paul was able to recognise the man who appeared to him in vision as being a Macedonian. After the vision Paul and his team were able to determine that God now wanted them to move on to Macedonia: '*God had called us to preach the gospel to them*'. This was an important turning point in the history of missions, where by God's guidance, Paul's thinking and actions were now directed to Europe for evangelization⁵ – going to where the need was greatest at the time. Longenecker's conclusion here captures the lesson well: "Christian response to the call of God is never a trivial thing. Indeed, as in this instance, great issues and untold blessings may depend on it."⁶

After their decision to move on to Macedonia, they aimed at the important city of the province as it is recorded: '*to Philippi, which is a leading city of Macedonia*.'⁷ The city of Philippi was built and fortified in 358 – 357 B.C. by

⁴ Longenecker, *Acts*, 254. The link of Luke to the Macedonian vision suggests strongly that God uses human agency in communicating His will. People are, therefore, important in linking others to opportunities that are divinely arranged.

⁵ Longenecker, *Acts*, 254: "Authentic turning points in history are few. But surely among them that of the Macedonian vision ranks high. Because of Paul's obedience at this point, the gospel went westward; and ultimately Europe and the Western world were evangelized."

⁶ Longenecker, *Acts*, 254.

⁷ There is a translation debate, since it is not clear what ἡ τις ἐστὶν πρώτη[ς] μερίδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις "to Philippi, which is a leading city of Macedonia" exactly means.

Philip II of Macedon, who was the father of Alexander the Great.⁸ The city was located strategically near the sea, about ten miles from the port city of Neapolis, and in fertile plains, bounded by mountains and two rivers on each side. It was important for agriculture, gold mining and commerce. Its accessibility either by sea or by land on the Via Egnatia⁹ made it a natural place for missionary activity.

On the religious front, by the time Paul and his team came to the city, it was rather syncretistic, with various deities, but the imperial cult was dominant.¹⁰ This justifies why the man of Macedonia called for the help of the missionaries, since the climate was fertile for the proclamation of the gospel.¹¹

The choice of the city by Paul and his team may have been influenced by the thinking that if Macedonia was to be evangelized, then the leading city of the province was the best place to speak the word of God. This would enable the missionaries to maximise the results of their mission work. The call by God had been to Macedonia, but the responsibility of finding the most suitable place for ministry was left for the missionaries to decide.

2. The Conversion of Lydia – Acts 16:13-15

On the Sabbath, Paul and his team went to the riverside to find a place of prayer. Perhaps, since they had been in the city for several days, they had been informed of this as a place of prayer. This follows Paul's usual ministry method,¹² where he always began preaching in the place of worship – explaining the good news to those who were already familiar with the worship of God.¹³ The description of Lydia in Acts 16:14, where we are told that she was a worshipper of God, concurs with this suggestion. Why go to a place where people were already worshippers of God? Why not conduct an open-air evangelistic crusade? What role did results play in Paul's thinking and ministry style? A simple answer is that Paul went to those who already had an idea of the worship of God in order to maximize the ministry results.

God, who had directed the missionaries to Macedonia, also facilitated the conversion of Lydia: '*the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul*' (Acts 16:14). The Lord who had forbidden the missionaries from speaking the word in Asia now confirmed that He had called them to Macedonia

See two different translations of this phrase in Acts 16:12 as represented by the NIV and GNB.

⁸ Hawthorne, *Philippians*, xxxiii.

⁹ For further details see O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 3-4.

¹⁰ O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 4-5.

¹¹ Cf. the revelation by the possessed slave-girl that Paul and his team were servants of the most high God and had brought the message of the way of salvation (Acts 16:17).

¹² O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 6.

¹³ Where a city did not have enough men to form a quorum for a Jewish synagogue, worship would be conducted outside the city, most probably beside a river. See the commentaries on Acts for a fuller discussion on this.

by converting Lydia and her entire household to the new teaching. Again, the conversion of Lydia seems to be providential since she is a business woman of Thyatira and would therefore share her faith as she went about her business beyond the city of Philippi.

The plea of Lydia to the missionaries that they enter her home and stay seems to suggest they needed a place to stay, which she was willing to provide: *“And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.’ And she prevailed upon us”* (Acts 16:15). Lydia’s plea indicates a positive result for the ministry of Paul and his team of missionaries. It is an indicator as to whether their ministry had been successful. The decision to stay in Lydia’s house indicates that they believed her conversion was genuine.

3. A Slave-girl Possessed by an Evil Spirit – Acts 16:16-18

The evil spirit in the girl made what seems like a wonderful revelation to her owners as she followed the missionaries: *‘These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved’* (Acts 16:17). This she did for many days, but there are no recorded converts¹⁴ as a result of her revelation – the evil spirit was not speaking for the sake of conversion but confusion. Paul, therefore, being troubled by these continued utterances, commanded the evil spirit to come out of the girl in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 16:18). The formula of exorcism seems to follow the same pattern followed by Peter and John in the healing of the crippled beggar at the temple gates (Acts 3:6). The order of words in the original are: *‘I command you in [the] name of Jesus Christ to come out of her’* (my translation). The command is, therefore, given on the basis of the name of Jesus Christ – the name of Jesus Christ is not used here as an instrument hence the English translation, ‘in [the] name’. Paul, therefore, invokes the authority of Jesus Christ in driving out the evil spirit (cf. Matt 28:18).

The results were immediate – *‘at that moment the spirit left her’* (16:18). This meant that the girl could no longer give divinations and most probably she was included in the community of believers, judging by the wrath of her masters.

4. The Philippian Imprisonment – Acts 16:19-28

This was an unplanned event, although it was always a possibility as Paul was very aware of the dangers of preaching the gospel. The imprisonment was a result of exorcising the spirit of divination from the slave girl (Acts 16:16-18). This otherwise benevolent action led Paul into deep trouble, since the slave

¹⁴ It has been suggested that the Philippian jailer must have heard the message of the girl, since he was able to ask Paul and Silas what he needed to do in order to be saved (Acts 16:30). The endeavours by the evil spirit in the slave-girl to preach might be similar to what Paul intimates in his letter to the Philippians - that some were preaching Jesus in order to harm him (Philippians 1:15, 17-18).

girl's masters benefited from her otherwise sorry situation.¹⁵ They now stood to lose money, since the slave girl had brought them profit through the spirit of divination (Acts 16:19). Seeing Paul and Silas as the source of their poverty, they trumped up charges against them before the chief magistrates. '*These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice*' (Acts 16:20-21).

The chief magistrates did not give Paul and Silas an opportunity to tell their side of the story as we learn later, but went on to pass judgment. They were flogged and put in prison under high security (Acts 16:22).

5. The Conversion of the Philippian Jailer – Acts 16:29-34

Although at face value this was a punishment to imprison Paul and Silas, they took it positively and used the occasion to pray and to sing praises to their God. They chose the quiet of the night as the right time to worship their master – '*about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening*' (16:25). Even at this late hour, the narrator tells us that the other prisoners were listening – we are not told the content of the prayer, but one can assume that it had something to do with the gospel.

The Lord came to their rescue (16:26), but not as quietly as he had done in the case of Peter (12:5-11). All the prisoners' chains fell off and the doors were opened (16:26). Perhaps this speaks of how the Lord was determined to let loose men and women imprisoned by sin (cf. Luke 4:18-19).

The jailer's first reaction was to prepare to kill himself, perhaps because the jailers in Peter's case were all executed. If the jailer feared the same fate, one wonders why he wanted to execute himself (16:27).¹⁶

Paul was alert and came to the jailer's rescue. Paul and Silas did not run away, neither did they allow the other prisoners to escape. What became of these prisoners we are not told, since the jailer's story now takes centre stage. The jailer addresses Paul and Silas as his superiors (16:28-30). He fell face down at the missionaries' feet to plead for mercy, because he had become aware of the higher authority of the God whom these men served. '*What must I do to be saved?*' was his desperate cry (16:30). The response is very short and precise. '*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household*' (16:31). Salvation had come to the jailer and his whole household (16:31-34). What seemed to be an evil deed done to the missionaries resulted in

¹⁵ Those who try to improve the lives of the oppressed may be seen as enemies, as in this story. Sometimes the sorry state of the weak carries with it economic benefit for others. As we attempt to create change, those who benefit from the status quo will find this an unwelcome intrusion.

¹⁶ I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, TNTC, (Leicester: IVP, 1980), 272, suggests no rational explanation is possible, and that the jailer may have lost his senses during the incident.

a plentiful harvest. The jailer and his household were baptised that very night (16:33) and shared a meal with Paul and Silas (16:34).

6. The Release from Prison – Acts 16:35-39

Paul and Silas stood their ground when the authorities sought to release them privately, even though they had disgraced them in public. They demanded an apology from the appropriate authorities before they would depart. Their rights as citizens could not be compromised simply because they were missionaries (16:35-39). Paul's statement is very telling: *'They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out'* (16:37). The magistrates were forced to come to Paul and Silas and make peace with them (16:39).

1.7 The Departure from Philippi – Acts 16:40

The narrator tells us that Paul and Silas, after their release from prison, went to Lydia's house where they encouraged the brethren (Acts 16:40). The brief ministry at Philippi had gathered together a group of Christians, now referred to as 'brethren' – men and women believers. Interestingly, Lydia's house became a 'house church'. On their departure, Paul and Silas seem to have left behind Luke and Timothy to tend the church.

Two other stopovers in Philippi are given very little space in Acts (Acts 20:1-6). There is no need to discuss them here, but it is prudent to mention that Paul had a continued link with the Philippian church.

A Biblical View of Results

1. The Philippian Epistle and a Biblical View of Results

The Philippian epistle has rightly been described as the most personal letter among all the Pauline epistles. In it Paul expresses his deeply felt joy¹⁷ in every remembrance of the Philippian believers (1:3-4). Paul explains why he thanks God and is filled with joy as he remembers the Philippian believers - they have continued to share in the work of the gospel, even to the time of writing (1:5).

1.1 The Results That Paul Had Hoped to Accomplish at Philippi

In the opening chapter of Philippians, Paul expresses confidence that *'the one having begun a good work in/among you will bring it to completion/perfection until/at the day of Christ Jesus'* (1:6). The question to raise here is, what work had begun among the Philippians? And who is referred to by the participle *'the one having begun'*? It is most likely that Paul was thinking of God and remembering the way in which the missionary work in Macedonia was directed by divine guidance (Acts 16:6-10). From these opening words by Paul and the narrative of the Macedonian ministry in Acts 16:6-40, we conclude that

¹⁷ The terms depicting 'joy' in the epistle to the Philippians occur numerous times: 'joy' – 5 times; 'glad' – 2 times; and 'rejoice' – 7 times (based on the Greek text).

Paul hoped to accomplish a certain work, referred to here as 'a good work' among the Philippians.

Put in another way, the missionaries had decided, following the Macedonian vision, that God had called them to preach the word to the Macedonians (Acts 16:10). The result of such preaching amounted to what the Macedonian man had called 'help' in his plea to Paul; 'Come over to Macedonia and help us' (Acts 16:9). It is important to understand what Paul interpreted this 'help' to mean, so that he could know when 'help' had been delivered.

As noted above, the term 'help' to the missionaries meant 'to preach the gospel to them' (Acts 16:10). But preaching the gospel presupposes that the recipients of the gospel had an obligation to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation (Acts 16:31). After the act of believing, the converts were to join a Christian group for mutual support (2:1ff. cf. Acts 16:40).

That Paul also expected the Philippians to grow in their Christian life is evidenced in his prayer for them (1:9-11). The content of this prayer summarizes the results of the certain work – Paul's ministry among the Philippians and God's continued work among them.¹⁸ The first of these was their love, which must not stop with them, but should overflow to others (1:9). This love is to be accompanied by full knowledge and moral insight, by which they are to discern God's plan for their present life (1:10) – the ability to know what really matters.¹⁹ The ultimate result that Paul sought here was their blameless state²⁰ at the day of Christ Jesus for the praise and glory of God (1:11).²¹

1.2 The Indicators Used to Measure the Results

The question that we must deal with is this: How did Paul know when he got the results he wanted? For him to know when he got the results that he wanted there must have been some means of measurement - indicators for measuring the results.

The first convert of the Philippian missionary endeavour, Lydia, provides the clue to one such indicator. In her case God opened her heart to believe the message that was being preached by Paul (Acts 16:14). The first indicator, therefore, was the evidence of genuine faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 16:31-33).

The second indicator is that such a faith had to be backed with acts of righteousness (1:11) as evidenced in the two cases narrated in Acts 16: Lydia in

¹⁸ Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 96.

¹⁹ Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 96, 101-103.

²⁰ This was always the ultimate purpose for Paul as he went about preaching the gospel: to present everyone to Christ complete/perfect (cf. Col 1:28-29).

²¹ See Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 96, for a seven item summary of Paul's prayer.

Acts 16:15 and the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:34. Both Lydia and the Philippian jailer invited the missionaries to their homes for further fellowship.

The third indicator is that those who helped were ready to help others, that is, they were to share with Paul in the gospel ministry (1:5).

The fourth indicator is evidence of Christian maturity, growth in faith (1:27).

The fifth indicator is a willingness to suffer for the sake of Christ (1:29-30).

The sixth indicator is unity of purpose among the believers, oneness (1:9; 1:27; 2:1-4; cf. Jesus' prayer for unity among his disciples, John 17:20-23).

There must be a way to observe these indicators at work. Paul wanted to be physically present to experience the results, evidenced by his longing to visit the Philippians (1:8). But there are two ways of measuring the results, by personal visit and/or a reliable report (1:27). If Paul was to know whether his ministry had been successful according to the indicators outlined above, he could personally visit the Philippians (1:26, 27; 2:24). Since that was not possible because he was in prison, he decided to send someone to gather the report for him, in this case Timothy (2:19; cf. Acts 19:22). The messenger had to be someone that both the sender and the recipients trusted. This two-way trust can be seen in Paul's commendation of Timothy (2:20-23). Although Paul could have sent Epaphroditus to gather the report, he decided to send him back home not to compile a report, but to relieve the believers at Philippi of their anxiety concerning their messenger (2:25-30).

2. Paul's Response When Results Matched the Expectations

It does not need a specialist to discover that Paul was happy with the Philippian ministry. We may safely conclude that to Paul, the Philippian ministry was 'mission accomplished'. The Philippians had participated in the gospel from the beginning until now (1:5) and some of the Philippian women had been instrumental in the propagation of the gospel, since they had partnered with Paul in the work of the gospel (4:3; cf. Acts 16:15).

As can be detected from the Philippian epistle, Paul wrote to encourage the believers because they had met the criteria for Christian maturity. Indeed, he states without reservation that he always thanked God as he prayed for them with joy (1:3-5). Paul saw clear evidence of genuine faith among the believers at Philippi (1:6; cf. Acts 16:14-15, 31-34).

They had also participated in providing for his needs in the mission field, not only while at Philippi, but even beyond - for example at Thessalonica (4:15-16). The Philippians had been willing to provide for Paul on other occasions even though they didn't always have an opportunity to do so (4:10). Their endeavours to partner with Paul moved them to send Epaphroditus to him with provisions, for which he writes to express his gratitude (4:18). This concern and action proved beyond any reasonable doubt that Paul's ministry had produced the

desired results and in his letter Paul acknowledges this before God and to them. What they did was accepted in heaven and Paul blessed them (4:18-19).

3. Paul's Response When Results Did Not Match Expectations

The Philippian epistle does not reveal much concerning any results that did not match Paul's expectations. Even when he turns up the heat in the letter it is towards some perceived opponents.²² Space does not allow us to go into a long debate concerning the identity of the opponents. The mention of the opponents comes in a report concerning Paul's situation at the time of writing (1:12). These opponents were not among the Philippian believers, but could be Paul's opponents finding their way to Philippi or perhaps the Philippians had their own opponents (1:28). We should not conclude, therefore, that the Philippians failed to stand up to their opponents. It is our submission that what is included here concerning the Philippians is for their encouragement, rather than Paul accusing them of showing a lack of Christian maturity. The believers were to shun the false teachers (3:2) and instead follow Paul's example (3:17a) and other examples of good Christian character demonstrated by the missionaries (3:17b). Paul did not want to create an impression of a holier than thou attitude, but was willing to admit that he had not yet become all that he could be in Christ (3:13). And yet, he was pressing on and admonished his readers to follow on (3:14-16).

There are, however, negative results when Paul discusses unity. There were severe differences between some of the believers that caused Paul's joy to be incomplete (2:2). Even though the Philippians were close to Paul's heart (4:1), he could not fail to mention their weakness. That there was disunity among certain ladies was candidly stated (4:2). But he had the formula for solving the problem. He eloquently describes how the believers were to be united in Christ (2:1-4). This is followed closely by the example of humility displayed by Christ Jesus, though we do not have space to discuss in any detail the Christological hymn in 2:5-11. Finally, he returns to his earlier reference to unity (1:27) and strongly commands them to obey his instructions regarding unity (2:12-16).²³ If they hold fast to the word of life, then Paul will have a reason to boast as he parades them at the day of Christ Jesus because they represent all that he has done (2:16). The *'loyal partner'* is mandated to reconcile the two women who are singled out as having severe differences: Euodia and Syntyche (4:2-3). These women had made a great impact in the ministry of the gospel along with Clement and the rest of Paul's co-workers (4:3).

Paul's response to negative results can be summarised in the word 'calmness'. He exemplified this attitude when he was thrown into prison at

²² For a discussion on the debate on Paul's opponents see any of the commentaries listed in footnote #1 above.

²³ Although God was at work among them, they had a responsibility to work out their salvation in fear and trembling (2:12). See Silva, *Philippians*, 139, who rightly observes: "our activity is possible only because of divine grace".

Philippi as, with Silas, he prayed and sang hymns of praise to God. So too in the face of the disunity at Philippi, as he describes his opponents and talks about disunity among the Philippians, a calm spirit can be detected (4:5 - '*Let your gentleness be evident to all*'). The principle modelled here is that we are to face negative results with a positive attitude (4:6). This does not mean that Paul ignored the negative results. On the contrary, he faced them with the aim of either preventing further damage (3:17-19) or turning the situation around to bring positive results (2:1-4; 4:2-3).

Summary and Conclusions

The discussion so far has yielded some useful fruit in our quest for a biblical view of results. It can be concluded that Paul's ministry at Philippi was divinely guided. The fact that Paul and his team could know that the Holy Spirit had forbidden them from preaching the word in Asia and that, after Paul's vision, they could conclude that God had called them to preach in Macedonia, proves beyond doubt that they sought God's guidance in their ministry.

Thus the first principle in a biblical view of results is **divine guidance**. If the process is to be termed biblical, then God must play an important role in directing the proposed project. This calls for prayer in any venture grounded in Christian principles. Since divine guidance is usually given through human agency, if needy people do not draw attention as to their state, it is difficult to know how to help. It is the submission of this paper that God will bring both parties, the ones in need and the help providers, to an awareness of His will on any matter. As it was in the case of the Macedonians where a man of Macedonia appeared to Paul in a vision calling for help, men and women in need will 'appear' to us in whatever way that God enables them to reach us. Real change will only be effected if those to be helped are aware of their need and are ready to participate in the process of change as we observed in the case of the two notable conversions at Philippi: Lydia and the jailer.

The second principle is **obedience**. Paul and company, after being sure that God's hand was directing them to Macedonia, obeyed without delay.

The third principle consists of **concrete plans with measurable goals**. The ultimate purpose was to preach the word of God to the Macedonians so that in turn they would be helped, both in their immediate life on earth and in the future in the presence of Christ Jesus. Paul's goal was to invest in change, whereby he made ordinary Philippians into citizens of heaven who are counted as worthy in this life. Consequently, he reminded the Philippians that their way of life counted both in the present and in the future.

The fourth principle that can be gleaned from the foregoing discussion is an **effective evaluative procedure**. That is, there must be a way of reporting the progress of the ministry. Firstly, there has to be clearly defined criteria for measuring the expected results. Secondly, some kind of personal involvement in

evaluating the indicators is paramount, since we are dealing with people and not machines. Thirdly, any third party must be credible to both parties. Paul did not want to impose a person that the Philippians did not trust and thereby hinder the openness that is required in measuring results, whether positive or negative. If there is no trust, then it becomes difficult to establish the reasons for any negative results. Insider reports, as important as they are, have to be backed by independent assessment. This may be the reason for sending Timothy (an outsider) with Epaphroditus (an insider).

The fifth principle is **to commend believers when results match the expectations**. The epistle of Paul to the Philippians is more or less a commendation letter. In it he expresses his thanks to God for the work that had been accomplished among the Philippians. He also commends them for their continued support in the work of the gospel where they are singled out as the only church that partnered with Paul in the ministry of giving and receiving.

The sixth principle is **to point out firmly, but gently, any negative results**. Paul pointed out the danger posed by those who *'live as enemies of the cross of Christ'* (3:18) and warned his readers of the fate of such people. *'Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things'* (3:19). On the contrary, the Philippian believers were citizens of heaven (3:20-21). And yet as citizens of heaven, the readers had shamefully allowed a spirit of division to exist in their midst. This disunity is firmly dealt with by Paul. He opens up the exhortation concerning the need for unity by praying for their love to abound more and more (1:9) before proceeding to firmly rebuke their disunity.²⁴

The seventh principle: **The ultimate goal is to bring glory to God as the investment in people is paraded before Him on the day of Christ**. Although Paul sought to make his joy complete by urging the Philippians towards unity (2:2), his ultimate expectation was to stand proudly before Christ on account of their righteous lives.²⁵ In other words, the ultimate goal in seeking positive results is to bring glory to God.²⁶

In summary, there are at least seven proposed principles in a biblical view of results found as a result of our study of Paul's ministry at Philippi:

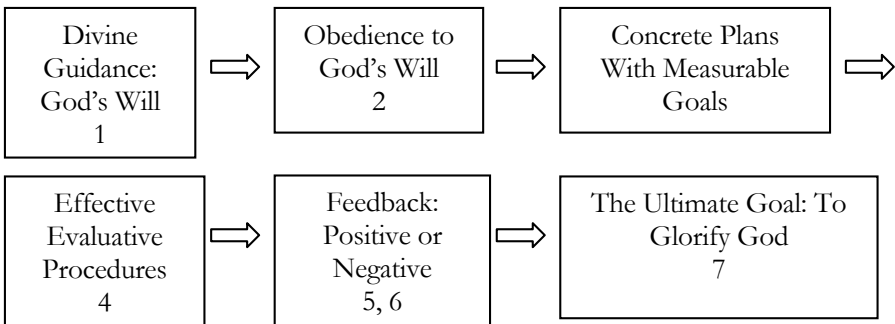
²⁴ So Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 26.

²⁵ *'It is by holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labour in vain.'* 2:16 (NRSV); cf. 1:27; 2:12-15.

²⁶ Silva, *Philippians*, 58.

1. Divine Guidance
2. Obedience to Divine Guidance
3. Concrete Plans With Measurable Goals
4. Effective Evaluative Procedures
5. Feedback: Commendation When Results Match Expectations
6. Feedback: Firm but Gentle When Results do not Match Expectations
7. The Ultimate Goal in Seeking Positive Results is to Glorify God

These seven proposed principles provide the following model of biblical view of results.



In conclusion, it is our humble submission that to seek for results is both biblical and desirable. The apostle Paul made it clear that he did not expect to toil for nothing (2:16). He wanted results that matched his expectations and worked hard to produce them in the Philippians. We cannot afford to expect less in any work that is associated with God, not least in missionary work.

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