

The Poisoning of Healthy Latin American Churches and Ministries



William F. Ritchey



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How to read this book

WHAT THIS TEXT IS: This text is an analysis of three dangerous and insidious poisons that are harming the ministries and lives of our Latin American churches, plus a study of how to overcome the effects of these poisons. As such, it approaches the subject much as would any medical text. It examines the *nature* of the poisons, the *source* of the poisons, the *effects and symptoms* of the poisons, and the *development* of an adequate detoxification program (dedicating a large portion of the text to these last two areas). In other words, this text is very focused and concentrates on a problem and its solution.

WHAT THIS TEXT IS NOT: Therefore, this text is not a general summary of what God is doing across the churches of Latin America. While it is true that He is doing many wonderful and marvelous things on this continent, and the reader is highly encouraged to find out more about His activity through sources such as *Operation World* (see the bibliography for further information), it is not the purpose of this text to provide this type of general information. Rather, this text is written for “medical staff” who are interested in understanding more about why a certain part of the body of Christ is functioning in an unhealthy way, how to detect the presence of this particular problem, how to analyze the severity of the problem, and how to help heal this portion of the body. *Therefore, to the average reader, this book probably will be as interesting as a medical text on the dangers and treatment of something like carbon monoxide poisoning.*

PLEASE READ THIS TEXT IN CONTEXT: Reading this text without knowing the broader context of the blessings that God is pouring out across the churches in Latin America could result in leaving the reader with a distorted and discouraging view of Latin American church life. It would be much like a person reading a medical book dedicated to the analysis and treatment of a very serious disease, but without first being convinced of their own general good health. Hypochondria could take over and leave this reader with a distorted and discouraging perception of their overall health. *That is not the desire nor aim of this work.* This text is a medical manual written for medical staff that already understand the general good health of their patient, but also understand that this patient is suffering from a very serious ailment that must be studied, analyzed, and corrected if this patient is to resume a healthy, productive life. If you are among this medical staff, then you are cordially invited to read and analyze this text, and then work toward healing this patient.

PLEASE READ THIS TEXT AS A REFERENCE WORK: Since this text provides an in-depth analysis of the effects of these three poisons, as well as a lot of other very detailed information, the reader is encouraged to use this text basically as a reference work, taking advantage of the structured divisions to skim the general information and then focus in on the precise area and material in which they are interested.

1.

Introduction

For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice,
And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.
Hosea 6:6

The title of this work may raise a few eyebrows, and it might even be unpleasant for some. How could anyone think of poisoning a church or a ministry? Yet that is the conclusion of 30 years of observation and two and a half years of concentrated investigation and analysis. Our churches and ministries in Latin America are being poisoned. And often the very participants and leaders of these churches and ministries are unknowingly contributing to the distribution of the toxic substances involved.

Is this perception accurate? If so, how is this happening and why? What are the poisons affecting these churches and ministries, and is there a way to offset their toxic effects? These and other similar questions will be addressed by this study.

Our goal is health

In almost 30 years of service as a missionary in Latin America, I know of no one who has intentionally set out to plant or found an *unhealthy* church or ministry. During 18 years of teaching in a formal theological education context (seminary level), our goal as professors, and that of our students as well, was to develop healthy churches and ministries. And during 12 years of teaching in a local-church-based theological education program, our goal as instructors, and that of our students, has always been to develop healthy churches and ministries. If this is our thrust, if this is one of our main concerns, where are we with regard to its accomplishment? Do we have healthy churches and ministries?

What does “healthy” look like?

If we are to gauge our progress toward establishing healthy churches and ministries, we must first know what a healthy entity looks like. The Bible uses various concepts and images to help describe spiritual health. Among these are the elements in the following list.

An interdependent, united body. One of the most common images that the Bible uses to describe spiritual health is that of an interdependent, united body (Rom. 12:4–19; 15:5–6; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 5:13–15; 6:2; Eph. 4:1–6, 31–32; Col. 3:12–24). We are all one in Christ, joined together in His body. We are to be of one mind, one spirit, and one purpose (Phil. 1:27; 2:2). And although we have differing gifts and functions, as God has ordained, we are to realize that all are necessary and important for the body to function properly (1 Cor. 12:12–27). Although there is a degree of hierarchy within the body (1 Cor. 12:28–31), this does not abolish the underlying tone of unity and mutual submission, where we are to consider the other as more important than ourselves (Rom. 12:5, 10, 16; 1 Cor. 12:25; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2; 5:21; Phil. 2:3; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Pet. 4:10).

A humble servant. Another image that the Bible uses to describe spiritual health is that of a humble servant who has been bought with a price and now lives to serve his Master and those whom his Master designates (Matt. 20:25–28; 23:6–12; Mark 10:42–45; Luke 22:24–27; Rom. 12:3, 10–11; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; 9:19–22; Gal. 2:20). There is to be no lording it over another, no abuse of power or position. Rather, we are to have a humble spirit of serving one another in love.

A radically transformed new creation. This image stresses the severing of ties with our old nature (Rom. 12:1–2; 8:5–17; 2 Cor. 5:17). A spiritually healthy entity is one that is totally and radically transformed by the renewing of its mind, embracing the lordship of Christ both intellectually and in daily practice, resulting in a total commitment to God (Mark 12:30; Rom. 12:1–2). A key part of this process of transformation is the study and application of the Bible in its entirety (2 Tim. 3:16–17). The result is a totally new creation (2 Cor. 5:17) in which the old nature has been

crucified (Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14). Christ now dominates the new life (Gal. 2:20), which is lived in the power that God gives (Zech. 4:6; Acts 1:8; Rom. 15:13; 1 Cor. 2:3–5; 2 Cor. 6:7; Eph. 2:8–10; 6:10; Phil. 1:6; 1 Thess. 1:5).

A profoundly changed individual. This transformation does not come about from a mere superficial imitation of godly activities. Rather, it is based upon a profoundly deep change in our very being, and this change of our *nature* then becomes the base from which these godly activities spring. This can be seen in the vocabulary that the New Testament uses for “imitate” and “imitator” (μιμέομαι and μιμητής) in verses where we are called upon to follow the example of other godly people (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9). These two Greek words carry an ethical focus, and refer not so much to duplicating a pattern of *behavior*, but rather to duplicating a style of *life*.¹ In other words, the focus is on transforming our life to match that of the godly individual who is serving as example, rather than simply duplicating the activities that individual performs. This emphasis on transformation rather than on performing activities also can be seen in Hosea 6:6, the verse with which this chapter began.

Therefore, spiritual health is not simply performing the appropriate rituals without previously acquiring an underlying radical change in our very being (the Pharisees were guilty of performing rituals without an underlying change of being, and they were severely criticized by Christ for their hypocritical behavior in Matt. 5:20; 23:2–7, 25–28). Nor is it sanctified or well-meaning activism or busyness (as was the case of Martha in Luke 10:38–42). In fact, spiritual health is not nearly so much about *doing* as about *being*. It is about sitting at Jesus’ feet, listening to His voice, applying what He has said to the transformation of our very being, and then acting in accordance with our transformed nature.

A simple roadmap to “healthy”

And how do we develop spiritually healthy individuals? The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46–49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8) describes the principal “markers” that we need to follow along this “road.” First, we need to go to where the lost are. Second, we need to preach or proclaim the Gospel and be a witness to what God has done in our lives. And third, the new believers need to be baptized and gathered into local congregations where they are to be taught to observe (guard, hold fast, follow) all that Christ

has commanded us. Accomplishing this produces healthy disciples, churches, and ministries.

And there is a bridge linking this roadmap to the biblical concepts and images of spiritual health that were mentioned earlier. All of these concepts and images are rooted in the first two road markers (going to the lost, and proclaiming the Gospel and witnessing), but they are developed and perfected in the third road marker (teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded).

Where are we in this process?

Given the long-standing, broad focus on establishing healthy disciples, churches, and ministries across Latin America, where are we in this process? What have we achieved? Are our churches and ministries healthy?

Health is a difficult concept to measure and quantify, and there is a marked shortage of solid data upon which to make a prognosis. However, some key sources of information do exist. For this task, we will base our general observations on the statistics and general analyses found in the widely respected *Operation World* (2010 edition)², and on two recent studies: one that the World Evangelical Fellowship finished in 1997 and called “ReMAP,” and the other completed by the World Evangelical Alliance (successor of the World Evangelical Fellowship) in 2007 and called “ReMAP II.” Each of these later two studies produced a lengthy book detailing and analyzing the findings of that study. ReMAP’s findings are contained in *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition*³ and ReMAP II’s findings are recorded in *Worth Keeping: Global Perspectives on Best Practice in Missionary Retention*⁴.

Going to where the lost are.⁵ This was the first of our markers on our roadmap to “healthy.” In this area, Latin America (and in this text, this term also includes the Carribean region) saw a great deal of growth between 1990 and 2000. During these years, the number of evangelical missionaries sent out from Latin America increased by 150% (in other words, the number more than doubled), reaching a total of about 5,500 evangelical missionaries in 2000. This is a significant improvement. However, it also must be viewed in the overall general health context. In 1990, Latin America sent out only 4.5 evangelical missionaries for every 100,000 of its evangelical population. This was the lowest sending rate of any continent in the world, except for the Middle East. By 2000, Latin America’s sending rate had increased to 7.5 missionaries for every 100,000 evangelicals. This placed Latin America above the

Middle East and Africa in the sending of missionaries, but well below the remainder of the world (the worldwide average sending rate was 27.3 missionaries per 100,000 evangelicals). In other words, it was an improvement, but it was far from a healthy situation.

During the next ten years, from 2000 to 2010, the number of evangelical missionaries sent out from Latin America *decreased* by almost 10% (even though its general evangelical population *increased* by 33% during those same years). This dropped Latin America's 2010 missionary sending rate to 5.1 missionaries per 100,000 evangelicals. Once again, this was the lowest sending rate of any continent in the world (except for the Middle East), and was less than one-tenth of the worldwide average sending rate of 67.6 missionaries per 100,000 evangelicals. Once again, this was far from a healthy situation.

Furthermore, in 1997 the World Evangelical Fellowship's "ReMAP" study highlighted some other details regarding Latin American missionary activity. Based upon the analysis of data from the countries chosen to represent this continent in the study, it was discovered that more than 40% of the missionaries sent out from Latin America abandon the mission field within five years, more than 67% abandon within 10 years, and more than 80% abandon within 15 years.⁶ Part of this may be rooted in the tendency of many Latin American churches to send out their missionaries through small missionary agencies. The ReMAP II study showed that agencies with less than 50 missionaries tended to lose missionaries more rapidly, and up to 20 times more rapidly, than larger agencies.⁷ Whatever the reason, this is far too short a ministry life to promote healthy missionary activity and ministry.

The ReMAP study also highlighted three other serious concerns regarding Latin American missionary activity.⁸ First, of all the world's evangelical missionaries, Latin American missionaries had the highest rate of being dismissed by their missions agency (and this rate was more than *three* times the rate for the average missionary). Evidently, it is much more difficult to work out a mutually acceptable solution between employer-employee in this context. Second, Latin American missionaries had the highest rate of abandoning their ministry due to an immoral lifestyle or due to abuse of either alcohol or drugs (again, they were almost *three* times as likely to suffer from this problem as the average missionary). And third, Latin American missionaries had the highest rate of abandoning their ministry due to inappropriate or insufficient training (once again, they were almost *three* times as likely to suffer from this as

the average missionary). This is not a picture of healthy missionary activity and ministry.

Proclaiming the Gospel and witnessing.⁹

This was the second of our markers on our roadmap to "healthy." In this area, the Latin American churches are doing much better. In 1990 there were about 49,000,000 evangelicals in Latin America (roughly 11% of the total continental population). By 2000 this number had grown by 50% to about 73,000,000 (14% of the total population), and by 2010 it had grown another 33% to about 97,000,000 (17% of the total population). As can be seen, the Latin American church is growing healthily in numbers, and it is expanding far beyond the continent's biological growth rate. In fact, in the past 20 years the number of evangelicals in Latin America has doubled. So this is an area where the church is healthy.

Gathering believers into local congregations where they are taught to observe all that Christ has commanded us.¹⁰ This was the third of our markers on our roadmap to "healthy," and the one to which the biblical concepts and images of spiritual health are most closely tied. New believers need to be placed into a discipleship context where they are taught to observe (guard, hold fast, follow) all that Christ has commanded us. This is necessary for maturity and complete health.

Unfortunately, our Latin American churches seem to be having significantly greater difficulty with this area than with evangelism (numerical growth). Regarding maturity in this region of the world, *Operation World* comments "maturity in the churches is a great need. Growth is undeniable in terms of numbers, finances and influence, but sanctification and maturity are often lacking."¹¹ And with regard to discipleship and spiritual development, this same source also says, "there is often a lack of commitment to this painstaking process of intangible growth, as well as a lack of the methods and structures to do so. ... Theological depth and biblical understanding of the Word of God are lacking. Few churches place solid grounding in God's Word as a priority. ... The majority of Latin and Caribbean evangelical congregations are led by pastors with little or no formal theological training. ... [And] lay leaders get even less by way of equipping."¹² This is not the description of healthy, mature churches and ministries.

A humble servant spirit and a strong, interdependent, united body. As we have seen, these are two of the images that the Bible uses to

help describe spiritual health. In the previous sections it also was seen that both of these images are tied to discipleship, and that the Latin American churches are not overly healthy in this area. Therefore, it would be logical to anticipate some health concerns regarding these two images as well. But is this assumption accurate? What is the evidence with regard to practicing a humble servant spirit in Latin America and developing a strong, interdependent, united body?

Operation World points out that one of the key issues within evangelicalism in this part of the world is that there are “leadership patterns that perpetuate the authority of one anointed leader-figure rather than promoting the life of the whole body of Christ. This gives great influence to father-figure pastors who function more as CEOs than shepherds. It excuses the laity from full participation in their biblical responsibilities, creating a performer/observer dynamic. It also often alienates and frustrates younger emerging leaders, whose development is held back by those refusing to loosen their grip and share responsibility and power.”¹³

In other words, rather than functioning as an interdependent body, there is a strong tendency either to be dependent upon an authoritative leader-figure or to be independent (as evidenced in the actions of that authoritative leader-figure). The former promotes passivity among the general congregation, and the latter openly contradicts the biblical teaching regarding leading with a submissive servant spirit. Both of these will significantly limit general maturity and health.

A radically transformed new creation and a profoundly changed individual. These are another two of the images that the Bible uses to help describe spiritual health. Once again, since these are associated with discipleship, an area that appears not to be overly healthy in the Latin American context, logic would lead us to anticipate health concerns with these two images as well. But is this expectation accurate?

Operation World, when speaking of this part of the globe, mentions that one of the areas of special

importance, worthy of the Church’s concentrated effort, is “moral purity and sanctification that yield Christlike character and holy lives and living for all to see.”¹⁴ In other words, lives are not being as radically transformed or as profoundly changed as they ought to be, resulting in an unhealthy situation.

And another area of concern mentioned by this same source underscores what could be referred to as a “consumeristic” attitude toward church, “where people attend based on what they can receive and therefore change churches frequently according to taste and mood. Such shallow attitudes undermine congregational health as well as personal Christian growth.”¹⁵

An overall assessment. Outside of the area of numerical growth as a result of evangelism within its own context, Latin America unfortunately does not present a very healthy picture of church and ministry life. There is a great need for spiritual maturity, including the very basic foundational needs of a serious commitment to this growth process and a development of tools to help reach this goal. For proper health, the Word of God must be understood correctly and become the foundation for all other growth. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case in many Latin American churches and ministries. And this lack of a healthy maturity has very serious negative repercussions in the development of a humble servant spirit; a strong, interdependent, united body; a radically transformed new creation; a profoundly changed individual; and an effective missionary force.

How did this happen?

This chapter opened by pointing out that our goal is, and has been, the development of *healthy* churches and ministries. If this is so, then how did we end up with something so different from what we desired? The answer is that our work in Latin America has been seriously affected by three very strong, lethal, insidious, and elusive poisons.

2.

Identity and production of three insidious, elusive poisons

What is meant by “insidious” and “elusive”? The *Oxford Dictionary* defines “insidious” as “proceeding in a gradual, subtle way, but with harmful effects,”¹⁶ and the *Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary* defines it as “developing so gradually as to be well established before becoming apparent.”¹⁷ Therefore, an insidious poison is one that acts in a slow, gradual, subtle way, and whose presence remains basically unnoticed until the entity affected has absorbed a significant amount of that poison. Regarding the meaning of “elusive,” the *Oxford Dictionary* defines this word as “difficult to find, catch, or achieve,”¹⁸ and the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines it as “tending to evade grasp or pursuit; hard to comprehend or define; hard to isolate or identify.”¹⁹ Therefore, an elusive poison is one that is very hard to detect, isolate, or identify, and therefore, also very hard to comprehend. In short, we are talking here of three poisons that are extremely dangerous.

An illustration

A common poison that serves as a very good illustration of the three poisons that are affecting our Latin American churches and ministries is carbon monoxide.²⁰

An elusive and insidious poison. Carbon monoxide is a very elusive gas. It is colorless, odorless, tasteless, and initially nonirritating, and therefore cannot be detected by any of the human senses. Furthermore, its symptoms and signs are variable and nonspecific, including headache, dizziness, weakness, weariness, drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and altered mental status. Since many other ailments happen to share these same symptoms, this makes it even more difficult to isolate and identify carbon monoxide poisoning.

Regarding its insidiousness, carbon monoxide can poison an individual in a relatively slow, gradual, subtle way, but with very lethal results. Due to the weariness and drowsiness that this gas can

cause, people breathing it may simply fall asleep, unaware that they are being poisoned. In fact, you might say that the more an individual is poisoned by this gas, the less conscious they may be of being poisoned.

Its production. Under average domestic conditions, carbon monoxide is generated by burning a gas (or other product containing carbon, such as wood or coal) in an inadequate environment that does not allow for complete combustion. Methane gas can serve as a very simple illustration of this process.

When burned in an *adequate* environment, two molecules of methane combine with four of oxygen to produce two molecules of carbon dioxide and four of water: $2 \text{CH}_4 + 4 \text{O}_2 \rightarrow 2 \text{CO}_2 + 4 \text{H}_2\text{O}$. The flame is blue and almost invisible, and produces the greatest amount of heat. The reaction is basically harmless, producing nothing more than two of the principal ingredients of any standard soft drink. Therefore, this is a healthy environment for this reaction.

However, if this environment is altered just slightly, and the amount of available oxygen is reduced from four molecules to three, we suddenly have an *inadequate* environment. Now, two molecules of methane combine with three of oxygen to produce two molecules of carbon monoxide and four of water: $2 \text{CH}_4 + 3 \text{O}_2 \rightarrow 2 \text{CO} + 4 \text{H}_2\text{O}$. The flame shifts in color to yellow, and although it is now more visible, it also produces less heat (in other words, it is less productive or less effective). And the reaction, far from being harmless, is now lethal. Therefore, this second environment is not only an unhealthy one, it is also a deadly one.

Its treatment. The treatment of carbon monoxide poisoning varies according to the degree of that poisoning. One of the principal problems is that carbon monoxide bonds with the hemoglobin in the blood, so that it cannot effectively transport oxygen to the rest of the body, and the person begins to suffocate. This bond between carbon

monoxide and hemoglobin will eventually be broken, but the speed with which this happens depends upon the concentration of oxygen made available to the hemoglobin. For a person breathing normal atmospheric air, the half life of carbon monoxide in their blood is about 320 minutes. In other words, it will take about five and a half hours for 50% of the carbon monoxide in the blood to be displaced with the oxygen they are receiving through the air. Depending upon the degree of poisoning (that is to say, the concentration of carbon monoxide in the blood), a person could easily die of suffocation before enough carbon monoxide is displaced.

Treatment, then, is generally geared toward increasing the amount of oxygen available to the hemoglobin, thus speeding up the displacement of the carbon monoxide by oxygen. Carbon monoxide's normal half life of 320 minutes can be shortened to 80 minutes if the person breathes oxygen through a non-rebreather mask.²¹ And it can be shortened to less than 25 minutes if hyperbaric oxygen therapy is used, where the individual is placed in a special pressure chamber and oxygen is supplied at two to three times atmospheric pressure (the increased pressure doubles or triples the absorption of oxygen and the displacement of carbon monoxide).²²

Regarding treatment, in simple cases of slight carbon monoxide poisoning, minimal medical attention may be required. The affected individual is moved out of the toxic environment and perhaps given oxygen for a brief period. In cases of moderate carbon monoxide poisoning, basic medical attention is required. The affected individual is moved out of the toxic environment and given 100% oxygen until they are symptom-free (often for about four to five hours). Additional testing will probably follow. And in cases of more severe carbon monoxide poisoning, advanced medical attention is required. The affected individual is moved out of the toxic environment, given 100% oxygen, and closely monitored (probably in a hospital environment). Depending upon the case, hyperbaric oxygen therapy may be administered.

Parallels with the context of our Latin American churches and ministries. This illustration of carbon monoxide poisoning has been rather detailed, because there are *numerous* parallels between carbon monoxide poisoning and the poisoning of our Latin American churches and ministries. By understanding a little of the danger of carbon monoxide, its development or formation, and its treatment, it will be easier to grasp the danger, development, and treatment of the three poisons affecting the Latin American context.

The identity of these three poisons

First of all, we need to identify and recognize the existence of these three poisons. This will not always be easy, as the poisons *are* elusive. They may be hard to detect in a given context, and it may be difficult to understand how these poisons were produced and how they affect our churches and ministries. Yet without this process of identification and comprehension, treatment will be impossible. And if treatment is impossible, then these churches and ministries run a significant risk of very serious consequences.

Democratized feudalism. The first of the three poisons is what we will refer to as democratized feudalism.²³ Since we will discuss each of these poisons in greater detail in the chapters that follow, only an introduction will be given here. Basically, this poison involves seeing, interpreting, and responding to the surrounding context in a feudalistic way. The world is divided into two basic groups, lords and vassals, with everyone having the right to be a lord in at least some context or another (hence the *democratized* feudalism).

A person suffering from this poison will act as a feudal lord, behaving in a very autonomous and sovereign fashion, where their word is law within their domains, and where one of the worst possible sins would be to violate their autonomy and/or sovereignty. This leads to a form of absolutism (on a restricted geographic and social scale), where the individual basically exercises his or her powers without restriction, at least as much as is possible. This is their right as a feudal lord. For example, if you happen to need a permit, you may be made to wait for hours (and perhaps days or even years) before you will be given your permit, even though you satisfy all the requirements. This is one way that this type of a feudal lord displays his or her power, and your waiting this length of time is how you show proper respect for that power.

Another thing that is the right of this feudal lord is to take direct advantage of (in other words, seize or “expropriate”) the efforts and contributions of his or her vassals (those who work under this lord). Therefore, it is not uncommon, if you work in an organization, for your supervisor to come to you and say that they need an analysis and a full report by a certain date. Then, when you turn in your report, complete with a cover sheet that lists you as the author and analyst, your supervisor will remove your cover sheet and substitute their own in its place, claiming full credit for your work. And they will do this in your pres-

ence, before dismissing you from their office. By so doing, this feudal lord displays their authority and rights, and you display your respect of this authority and rights.

On the other hand, the role of a vassal is quite different. According to the basic code of feudalism, the vassal owes dependency, loyalty, and service to his or her lord, and in return for this obligation, the vassal is given certain benefits (use of the lord's land, protection, etc.).²⁴ It is a give-and-take situation that has some serious repercussions for the vassal's development. Due to the vassal's *dependency*, he or she is limited with regard to any entrepreneurial thinking, initiative, and/or expression of an interdependent spirit. In this area, the road is mostly one-way, flowing from the lord to the vassal. Due to the vassal's *loyalty* to the lord, he or she is limited with regard to being able to try things out on their own, launch out in any new directions, think for themselves, etc. And due to the vassal's obligation to *serve* the lord, he or she is limited once again with regard to any personal initiative, entrepreneurial thinking, and/or expression of an interdependent spirit.

This relationship of vassal-lord is easily seen in the relationship between an average church congregation and its pastor. In this context, the pastor fulfills the role of the feudal lord and the congregation fulfills the role of the vassal. In exchange for spiritual protection, spiritual guidance, and other similar benefits, the congregation is under the feudal obligation to *depend* upon their pastor. Among other things, this means not exercising any serious initiative, but rather allowing their pastor to feed them, do their Bible study for them, perform the other facets of the ministry, etc. The congregation is also under certain obligation to be *loyal* to their pastor and not differ significantly with his opinions or beliefs. And the congregation is under certain obligation to *serve* their pastor, but in ways that will not usurp or endanger his lordship. All of this leads to an unhealthy body life where the pastor is overburdened with the tasks of the ministry, and the congregation is very limited with regard to participating in the ministry and exercising their spiritual gifts.

Activism. The second of the three poisons that we will study is what we will refer to as activism. Basically, this poison involves being convinced that the best way to transform what we *are* is by *doing* the appropriate activities, and that the best way to measure the amount of transformation *achieved* is by measuring the amount of activities *completed*.

Therefore, a person suffering from this poison will believe that the best way to become educated

is to do the appropriate activities associated with grade school, high school, and university. And by fulfilling these *activities*, they are magically "educated" (no matter whether they have learned anything or not). And, since they also believe that the best way to measure the amount of transformation achieved is by measuring the amount of activities completed, then the further along you are in the sequence of academic activities, the more educated you are (again, regardless of what you have actually *learned*).

This poison of activism affects many areas of church and ministry life in Latin America. For example, if someone wants to be more holy (a very laudable goal), then they do more of the activities that the church has prescribed as appropriate and conducive to achieving holiness. And it doesn't really matter so much if what they actually *are* (their nature, their being) is transformed in this process. Why? Because they are convinced that the best way to measure holiness is by the *quantity* of appropriate activities achieved. Therefore, if you only attend Sunday services, you're not very holy. But if you attend Sunday services, plus prayer meeting, plus a weekly Bible study, plus some weekly ministry event, then you are much more holy (regardless of how you happen to live outside of these prescribed events).

As can be expected from the traits of this poison, it also tends to feed upon itself in an upwardly spiraling cycle. In other words, to keep growing in holiness, you must continually be adding more and more appropriate activities. And any decrease in activities is seen, by definition, as a corresponding decrease in holiness. This "Martha complex" (based upon Luke 10:38-42) can very easily short-circuit maturity and growth by allowing an increasing agenda of activities to crowd out true learning (as was the case with Martha). It can also lead to rapid burnout and a desire not to participate in church, ministry, or even discipleship, because the price has been placed too high, much higher than what God had intended (again, as was the case with Martha and her trying to please the Lord).

It also should be noted that this poison of activism does not conflict with a more passive vassal role under the poison of democratized feudalism. How so? The activism is limited to the activities that the feudal lord has decreed to be appropriate and conducive to the desired goal. In other words, a congregation can act as a passive vassal (automatically accepting the correctness and validity of the list of appropriate activities prescribed by their pastor or church denomination), while actively pursuing the activities on that list. Therefore, rather than contradicting each

other, the poisons of democratized feudalism and activism actually can reinforce each other.

Passivity. The third of the three poisons that we will study is what we will refer to as passivity. Basically, this poison involves being convinced that the best way to achieve the fulfillment of the appropriate activities involves the use of substitutes. The basic idea here is to allow others (preferably the “experts”) to develop the required solution, and then the “common” person simply adopts that solution. Therefore, the lists of appropriate activities (the “solution”) referred to in the poison of activism tend to be developed by other human beings, trained and authorized to make these lists. This is much easier and faster than having to develop the solution ourselves, and it is safer, too (since any mistakes in the solution can always be blamed on the “expert” that developed it).

There are substitutes at the level of ideology and philosophy, where the affected individuals adopt entire systems. For example, a congregation may adopt an entire program of discipleship or church growth, developed by “experts” in Korea and proven highly effective within the Korean church context. This is then imported, lock, stock, and barrel, into the Latin American context, and then applied by those who neither adequately understand the program nor have achieved the thought patterns and spiritual transformations (the transformed lifestyle) that underlie the program and were achieved, at least in part, through the process of developing that program. Instead, under the influence of the poison of activism, the program’s *activities* are duplicated, with the expectation that the fulfillment of these activities will magically result in the discipleship and church growth experienced in Korea. And everyone wonders why such a useful and obviously beneficial program failed to function in the expected way in the Latin American context. The base, upon which the whole program was built, is missing.

There are also substitutes at the level of the individual activities themselves. This occurs when a person takes advantage of (seizes or “expropriates”) the activities that have been achieved by others. For example, a church leader, rather than actually studying, analyzing, and grappling with the biblical text himself, may depend more upon books written by “experts” who have studied this text. Now I’m not speaking against using commentaries and other Bible helps here. But this is not the case of an individual using these sources to *help* him or her to study the Bible personally. Rather, the effect of this poison is to have the individual simply adopt the conclusions given in

the helps, without truly processing the information that led to those conclusions. In other words, the learning process is short-circuited, with facts being tucked away in the mind without ever passing through or impacting the heart.

Another common example of using substitutes at the level of activities is when a member of the congregation does not feel a need to actually study the Bible themselves, but rather turns that activity over to their pastor (the “expert”). The effect of this poison is to have that individual simply come on Sunday morning and “expropriate” the biblical knowledge that their pastor has acquired. The end result is that Bible study is relegated to the “experts,” and the basic responsibility that the common church member feels is to simply listen to the truth expounded by these “experts.”

Obviously, this poison has serious negative repercussions with regard to discipleship and maturity. Basically, it short-circuits the entire process, offering a “finished product” without having to go through the arduous process of studying, analyzing, developing, and implementing that product. Unfortunately, it is in this arduous process that learning and transformation of life occur. Therefore, the poison short-circuits learning and transformation, while allowing the individual affected to display the finished product as a sort of hollow facade of having learned and applied the truths involved. It may look good, but there is nothing inside.

It also should be noted that this poison of passivity does not contradict the poison of activism. Why? Because the passivity oftentimes involves the proper way to perform the activity (for example, the *program* used), and not the actual performance of that activity. And when it *does* involve the performance of the activity (such as having the pastor study the Bible for them), there are always auxiliary activities that must be performed (such as faithfully attending Sunday morning services) for this core activity to be taken advantage of. And this poison of passivity *reinforces* the poison of democratized feudalism, as the feudal lords are many times the ones looked to in order to develop the solutions adopted.

The production of these three poisons

These three poisons are present in one concentration or another in virtually every context in the world, and they have been present historically, in one fashion or another, almost since Adam and Eve. In other words, they are universal. But if this is true, then how did they come to have such a strong, toxic presence in Latin America? Much like

in the case of carbon monoxide, certain elements of the Latin American environment have been *altered* over time, transforming it into an environment that has favored the production and concentration of these poisons. And to compound things even further, this altered environment also has led to an increased *susceptibility* to these poisons. In other words, people living in this environment not only are ingesting higher concentrations of these poisons, but they also are predisposed toward being more affected by these poisons.

And what has altered the Latin American environment this way? I believe that we can isolate three key factors that have helped to shape this context. To do this, we must first go back to the revolutions that liberated Latin America from Spain (1810 to 1825). These occurred within the greater context of a general wave of democratization all across Europe and the Americas. Within this wave, two very significant events stand out: the war for independence in North America (1776) and the French Revolution (1789). Both of these had far-reaching impact on the democracies that would follow. Therefore, these three factors are: *Spain*, which as the colonizing power had the broadest and most direct impact on shaping the Latin American environment; *North America*, which was the first democracy established in the Americas, and therefore could set precedents for other American nations; and *France*, which had moved into democracy from a political reality fairly similar to that of Spain.

In our analysis, we will be paying special attention to two key areas: the degree of political liberty enjoyed by the common people, and the vitality of the common people's spiritual life. Both of these are key important ingredients for establishing a healthy democracy. In the first place, political liberty forms the basis for a *strong* democracy, assuring the equality that democracy requires, while the faithful civil exercise of this liberty forms the "schoolroom" that teaches correct participation in a democratic government. Alexis de Tocqueville, a Frenchman famous for his analyses of the French Revolution and ensuing democracy and the United State's war of independence and ensuing democracy, made the following observation regarding New England town meetings where citizens exercise their political liberties and responsibilities, "town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science; they bring it within the people's reach, they teach men how to use and how to enjoy it."²⁵ And in the second place, a vibrant personal spiritual life forms the basis for a *safe* democracy by providing both the stimulus and the restraints (i.e., morality) necessary to properly guide and curb the indi-

vidual's exercise of their political liberties. De Tocqueville highlighted this relationship between faith and liberty when he said, "liberty cannot be established without morality, nor morality without faith,"²⁶ and "the safeguard of morality is religion, and morality is the best security of law and the surest pledge of freedom."²⁷

As tends to be the case with history, the development of these factors is complex and intertwined, and a thorough analysis would far exceed the parameters of this text. What follows is a brief, general summary, in large degree the product of investigations and analyses made during the 15 years that I served as professor of Church History in a Latin American theological seminary.²⁸

Spain. As the country that colonized Latin America, Spain had the broadest and most direct impact on forming the environment of that region. For the 800 years prior to this colonization, Spain was involved in a long struggle to retake its country from Muslim control. This process required very strong Spanish kings. And it was followed immediately by the colonization of the Americas and a period of immense geographical, political, and military expansion. Again, all of this required strong kings, which resulted in limiting the growth of political liberties for the common people. In 1588, the Spanish Armada suffered a major naval defeat at the hands of the English, and Spanish royal power began to decline. In 1714, the French had placed the Bourbon dynasty upon the Spanish throne, and Spain began to fall increasingly under France's control. However, political liberties for the common people do not seem to have grown while Spain's royal power waned. Rather, the country seems to have maintained a fairly feudal worldview up to the second half of the 19th century (long after the revolutions in Latin America).

Regarding religious life, Spain was one of the strongest Roman Catholic countries in Europe. During the Middle Ages, Catholicism began to emphasize an increasing dependence upon the Church and its officials (priests, bishops, popes, etc.) for the proper application of Christianity. The whole area of spiritual life was shifted into the realm of the professional clerics, resulting in the individual taking a more indirect role and exercising less responsibility for their own personal application of Christianity. This shift was graphically demonstrated in 1229 when the Catholic Church forbade the laity to read their Bibles (and this prohibition remained in effect until the mid 1960's). In other words, personal Bible study was no longer necessary for spiritual health. In fact, it was deemed to be a *threat* to spiritual health. The

Church was responsible for interpreting the Scriptures and deciding how to apply them for the people. And what remained for the common people? They were left with the task of performing the appropriate rituals assigned by the Church. This shifted the focus of spiritual life onto *doing* the appropriate activities in order to *become* the desired end product. The people would participate in mass in order to be fed spiritually, do penance in order to be forgiven, pay money in order to get souls freed from Purgatory, submit to the Church in order to be saved, etc.

Following this line of thought, the Church then began to gauge and decree the amount of spiritual transformation achieved in a person's life based upon the appropriate activities that individual had accomplished. It would decree a spiritual blessing based upon having climbed the *Via Dolorosa* on your knees, release from Purgatory based upon an offering given, spirituality based upon a pilgrimage made, condemnation based upon not obeying or submitting to the Church, and so forth.

Also at this same time, the Church began to emphasize the use of substitutes to help the people achieve the appropriate activities that would lead to the desired results. The people would use the saints and the Virgin to help their prayers to be heard and answered, they would use the priest to be able to participate in the mass, they would use the Church to achieve the correct interpretation of the Bible, etc.

In short, the Church became totally indispensable for every facet of spiritual life, and this life was achieved solely through the proper use of this Church. The people couldn't study the Bible for themselves, think for themselves, or reason through the biblical evidence. They were not capable of doing so. They were required to leave that to the spiritual "experts."

All of this helped to reinforce the basic feudal worldview that was present in the Spanish political realm. The Church filled the role of the spiritual feudal lord, offering protection to, dispensing blessing upon, and providing guidance for its followers (its vassals). And in exchange, the people owed dependence, loyalty, and service to the Roman Catholic Church (the three typical obligations that a vassal had).

In summary, the vibrant personal spiritual life that is necessary to guide and moderate the individual's exercise of their personal liberties was basically missing in Spain. So were the common man's political liberties. The basic worldview (both political and religious) was feudal and far removed from democracy.

North America. The political and religious

reality of North America (and of its colonizing power, England) was very different from that of Spain. Through their English heritage, the colonists that settled in North America were well accustomed to exercising their political liberties. Among other things, these liberties were founded in and guaranteed by the Common Law, which was a system of law based upon the customs and beliefs of the *people*, rather than those of the king (and thus the liberties that stemmed from this law were independent of the king). This was an ancient English right, and as early as 850 king Alfred the Great recognized and promoted this Common Law. These liberties were also based upon and guaranteed by: the Magna Carta, which in 1215 limited the king's power and reaffirmed that he was subject to the law; the Model Parliament, which in the 13th century included representation of not only the principal clergy and nobles, but also of knights, lower clergy, and representatives of the cities and towns; the Petition of Right, which in 1628 sought to again limit the power of the king and reaffirm that he was subject to the law; and the English Bill of Rights, which in 1689 assured basic civil rights and stated that Parliament, and not the king, was the political authority in England.

So, for the English, political rights had been enjoyed for more than 800 years when the colonists came to America. In fact, the English Bill of Rights refers to these rights as "true, ancient and indubitable rights and liberties of the people."²⁹ And based upon their rights and liberties, these colonists demanded a more direct and active participation in their government, and they based their laws largely upon the Bible and the Common Law (elements that were independent from the governing body). It was this training and exercise of their liberties that allowed a healthy democratic government to flourish in the English colonies.³⁰

Regarding religious life, the northern portion of England was evangelized by Ireland at the beginning of the Middle Ages, and this Irish Christianity was very different from the Catholicism of continental Europe.³¹ Although it had a similar creed and used monasteries to educate the people and expand its influence, its administrative and territorial organization was much more tribal, with the consequence that its various parts were fairly independent. This gave Irish Christianity a certain "democratic" or "equalizing" flavor that tended to bring religious life down to the level of the individual believer. It also promoted a more vigorous and personal application of Christianity, where the individual himself or herself was more responsible for and took a more direct role in their spiritual life. All of this led to Irish Christianity

encouraging the people to be *transformed* by their faith, and to live according to that transformation. In other words, the focus was on *being* a Christian (having your very essence transformed by Christ), and then your *actions* would flow naturally from that transformation. Basically, this was the opposite of the Catholic focus which stressed more *doing* the action in order to *become* the desired product.

In summary, the vibrant personal spiritual life that is necessary to guide and moderate the individual's exercise of their personal liberties was present in the English colonists. So were the common man's political liberties, as well as the custom of personally exercising these liberties. This provided for a very smooth and successful transition into democracy. In fact, the war for independence that the English colonists waged against England was not really a *revolution*.³² The people's basic thinking, manners, morality, liberties, etc. continued to be the same, both before and after the war. There was no great revolution in thought or life, just an increase in freedom and independence.

France. The political reality of France was fairly similar to that of Spain, except that France appears to have had a few more political liberties (although the liberties of the common people were significantly less developed than in England). In France (as compared to England), the kings tended to be more authoritarian and absolute, with little limiting of their power, and their will and word was basically law. There were some entities developed that could check the power of the French kings, such as the States-General and the *Parlement* (French high courts of justice), but the concept of political liberty at a popular level had not been developed either sufficiently or broadly enough for these entities to function reliably.

Therefore, with the French Revolution in 1789, the country basically attempted to throw off her feudal past and step directly into democracy. Unfortunately, she was not properly prepared for this step. She knew the theory of democracy, for at that time there were numerous French philosophers expounding the concept. But she lacked the underpinning of political liberties broadly exercised by the common people, and she lacked the religious faith that would guide and moderate the practice of these liberties. Why? Because these elements were also thrown off in the Revolution. The Revolution abolished the Common Law³³ that served as a basis for political rights. Instead of a law that was independent of the governing body, and thus capable of moderating that body, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man based the

law solely upon the will of the French masses.³⁴ And instead of fostering the people's religious faith, the Revolution (seeing the dominant Roman Catholic Church as an integral part of a decadent political system) also threw off its religious faith. In other words, the French Revolution was intentionally irreligious and hostile to Christianity.³⁵

In summary, the French Revolution was an attempt to establish democracy without the people having much previous training and experience in exercising their political liberties, and upon a foundation which excluded the moral and religious elements that guide and moderate the exercise of those political liberties. The end result was that a form of democracy was achieved, but it was built upon the former political lifestyle of the people, which is what they knew the best. In other words, the form of government changed, but the laws, ideas, customs, and manners of the people remained basically unchanged.³⁶ Interestingly, this promoted a form of democracy that was somehow compatible with the older feudal mindset.

The "environmental impact" of these three factors. Having analyzed these three factors, now we can examine how they have altered the Latin American environment so that it has favored the production and concentration of these three poisons, as well as an increased susceptibility on the part of the general population.

Spain's impact can be seen to promote the production of all three poisons. It fostered the production of democratized feudalism by maintaining political and religious practices that reinforced a feudal mindset, by not granting greater liberties in either the political or religious realms, and by not equipping the people to properly exercise these liberties (this last point was automatic, since the liberties didn't exist). It fostered the production of activism by maintaining religious practices that taught that by *doing* the appropriate activities, a person could *become* the desired finished product, and that the best way to measure the amount of transformation *achieved* was by measuring the amount of activities *completed*. And it fostered the production of passivity by maintaining political and religious practices that obligated the common people to depend upon, be loyal to, and offer service to those who were located above them in the hierarchy. All these were the results of a feudalistic political and religious setting. And, since many of these elements were in practice for 500 to 1000 years (in Spain and/or in Latin America), they have become very deeply ingrained in the habits, opinions, customs, and convictions of the general populace, thus making them more susceptible to these three poisons.

North America's impact can be seen to promote the production of democratized feudalism as well. This is because the democracy in North America had such a successful development that it created a very strong attraction toward democracy in general, especially in the Americas. The fact that North American reality differed so dramatically (both politically and religiously) from Spain and France doesn't seem to have deterred Latin America from attempting to implement something similar to what it saw in its northern neighbor.³⁷ Perhaps this is the effect of the poison of activism that says that if we *do* the activities that correspond to a democracy, then we automatically will *be* a democracy.

France's impact also can be seen to promote the production of democratized feudalism. France's political reality was much closer to Spain's, as compared with North America, although Spain does not appear to have developed the concept of political liberty for the common people as much as France had it developed (at least at the theoretical level). Therefore in the French Revolution, which occurred only 20 to 35 years before the revolutions in Latin America, the people in Latin America saw a political model that, although not equal to the North American model, offered a much higher degree of similarity to their own political context. And this model offered

another enticement as well. It offered a form of democracy that seemed to be closer to and more compatible with the feudalistic mindset to which the Latin Americans were accustomed. And although the French religious model often differed significantly from the Latin American religious reality, this does not seem to have posed a major barrier for Latin America borrowing on the political model.

Combining these three factors together, Latin America took a step very similar to what happened in France. She attempted to throw off feudalism and step directly into democracy, but without the prior adequate development of: political liberties for the common people, an informed and practiced exercise of these liberties by that people, and a vital religious life that would guide and moderate these liberties. In other words, she stepped into democracy, but without having laid the groundwork upon which successful democracy depends. And just like in France, the end result was that a form of democracy was achieved, but it was built upon the former political and religious lifestyle of the people. Their habits, opinions, customs, and convictions remained basically unchanged by the revolutions (in other words, they conserved their feudal mindset), and the ensuing democracy was heavily impacted by, and resulted compatible with, this mindset.³⁸

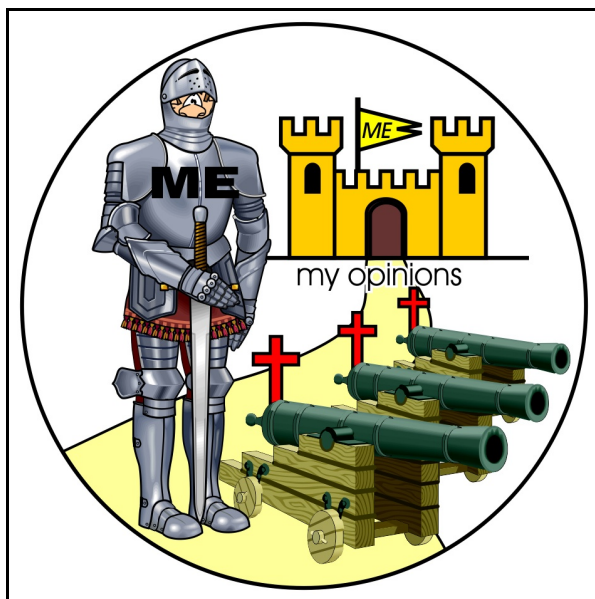
3.

The poison of democratized feudalism

Now the time has come to take a closer look at each of these three poisons, and to see how they prevent our ministries in Latin America from being healthy. We will start with the poison of democratized feudalism because it is the most complex of the three, and because it has multiple interactions with the other two and influences them heavily. We have already seen a basic definition of this poison, and we have seen how religious and historical factors have promoted its development as well as creating a greater susceptibility to it among the Latin American population. However, we need to understand it more in depth if we are to overcome it.

An illustration

Since democratized feudalism is a rather complex poison, we have developed a graphic to help illustrate some of the principal ways that it affects a person. We call this graphic the “bubble.” Please study it carefully as we will refer back to it various times during our description of this poison.



The “bubble”

Description of this poison

Overview. A person poisoned by democratized feudalism tends to construct and live within a bubble. This bubble is a protective invisible sphere that surrounds the individual, insulating him or her from external threats, and delineating or defining a closed and sacred portion of territory (kingdom) within which this individual reigns as absolute and sovereign feudal lord. In their sovereignty, this individual decides what may or may not penetrate their bubble, and normally only permits things to enter that will reinforce his or her personal position and/or opinion.

A territory where this individual reigns as absolute and sovereign feudal lord. The bubble defines a kingdom where its owner reigns supreme. They are lord of their castle, and their opinions are sovereign. Nobody, not even God, has the right to question the owner’s opinions or ideas within the limits of this sphere. Thus, it allows for the practice of feudalism, even within a context that normally would be considered democratic. Furthermore, it allows multiple kingdoms to exist in relatively close proximity, since no individual kingdom is very large. Both of these are key to allowing a *democratized* feudalism to function, where *all* have the right to be feudal lords of at least some domain. In other words, the bubble allows the individual affected with this poison to maintain a worldview that is both feudal and democratic at the same time.

A closed and sacred territory. Basically, the bubble is impregnable, and very little penetrates its shell. For this reason, the shell is represented by a solid line with no breaks or openings. And what little does penetrate must have the previous permission of the bubble’s owner. Normally, this person only allows in things that will reinforce his or her personal position or opinion. In other words, the only things allowed into the

bubble are things that will tend to support and reinforce the sovereignty and autonomy of the reigning feudal lord.

An inflexible kingdom. The bubble does not give up territory by changing its shape. A sphere is the geometric solid that encloses the *maximum* volume with the *minimum* surface area.³⁹ Now the surface area of the bubble is the border that its owner has to constantly defend (to keep undesired things from crossing over). And the volume of the bubble is the territory over which this owner rules. Therefore, the *optimum* form for the bubble must be a sphere. Only this geometric shape satisfies the feudal desire to rule over the greatest possible expanse of territory with the available defensive resources. In other words, changing to another form (such as a pyramid, a cube, a cylinder, or an egg-shaped form) would result either in giving up territory (through a decrease in volume in order to keep the same defensible surface area) or in weakening its borders (through an increase in surface area in order to keep the same volume). As much as is possible, the feudal lord prefers to avoid both giving up territory and weakening borders.

A small, relatively static kingdom. Since democratized feudalism says that *every* person has the right to be a feudal lord, then these kingdoms tend to be fairly limited in their extension. Otherwise, not everyone would be able to enjoy this right, especially in urban areas where many kingdoms must exist in a relatively small geographical space. It also means that the individual spheres tend to be fairly static regarding their size. If they were to grow, then it would be at the expense of the other spheres around that would have to shrink to permit this sphere's expansion. This would deny the *democratic* element of democratized feudalism. And if these individual spheres were to shrink, then it would be at the expense of the territory corresponding to these ruling feudal lords. This would deny the *feudal* element of democratized feudalism (since a feudal lord desires to reign over the largest kingdom possible).

An invisible kingdom. The bubble tends to be invisible. People, including the bubble's owner, seldom see it or take note of it. Rather, they basically are unconscious of the bubble's presence. Among other things, this invisibility prevents the owner from analyzing or transforming their bubble, since they don't even notice it. Therefore, it also helps assure that the bubble will remain basically unchanged (in other words, it is part of the bubble's self defense mechanism).

An egocentric and very individualized kingdom. Within the bubble, everything revolves around the owner. He or she is the center of this small universe. Due to this, the bubble also is very individualized. Although there may be many similarities between bubbles, each one also is unique because it is specially adapted to the particular individual reality of its owner. Thus it reflects the owner's individuality and his or her idiosyncrasies.

An individualizing kingdom. Coupled with the sovereignty of its owner, the individualized nature of the bubble leads to a very high degree of individualism. The bubble's owner is lord, and controls all within his or her domain. Their word is law, and it does not have to be defended or justified. They are free to do *what* they want, *when* they want, and *because* they want. Furthermore, they can see the world as they desire, because this is *their* bubble.

And the stronger the sense of sovereignty (i.e., feudalism), the stronger this individualism grows. Why? Because sovereignty promotes thicker and more rigid shells on the bubbles. Therefore, the greater the sovereignty, the greater the bubble's inflexibility. And because cooperating and working together (the opposite of individualism) require that people *coincide* in certain points, then the increased inflexibility of the bubble blocks this coincidence of bubbles. They can't get any closer than their rigid shells. They can't overlap, and they can't flex and mold to each other in order to fit together better. Therefore, these bubbles promote individualism.

And this individualism is another key element in helping make democratized feudalism work. It allows hundreds of thousands of little sovereign kingdoms to exist side by side with a minimum of friction. Everyone respects the uniqueness and the idiosyncrasies of the rest, by basically paying attention to their own little world and living in it. Anything beyond this would be meddling in another's kingdom.

A protective kingdom. Thanks to its rigid and impermeable shell, the bubble protects the *sanctity* of its owner's territory. Thanks to its impregnability, it protects its owner's *right to reign* as sovereign and absolute lord. And the bubble also provides a strong *suit of armor* for the owner to wear. Since this armor is a product of this uniquely individualized bubble, then the armor itself also tends to be uniquely individualized. In other words, it is specially designed to protect *this* individual and his or her idiosyncrasies. That is why it bears the title "me" in the drawing.

Furthermore, the bubble offers protection by allowing its owner to *import elements that reinforce* his or her personal ideas or opinions. For example, this owner can bring in God and certain parts of the Bible as “Christian artillery” designed basically to defend the sovereignty of this owner’s ideas and opinions. These elements appear in the drawing as Christian cannons aimed outside the bubble.

One of the main protective functions of the bubble is to allow its owner to *cope with a sense of inferiority*. Very few of us are able to live successfully as absolute lord and master of our universe. We’re human, and we just mess up too often. However, the bubble encourages *everybody* to live as absolute lord and master. Thus, everybody ends up living with a sense of inferiority. They are lord and master, but they know that they don’t deserve to be. Therefore, the bubble offers to protect them. How? By giving them a private space where they can hide undesirable and embarrassing elements (like failures and mess ups). Due to the impermeability of the bubble’s shell and the sovereignty of its owner, no one (not even God) has the right to examine and judge things inside this bubble, unless the owner agrees to allow it. As lord of their universe, the owner doesn’t have to be accountable to anyone beyond himself or herself. And if the owner is satisfied with the content of their bubble, then the rest should respect this individual’s opinion. Therefore, the owner is able to hide many shameful and embarrassing elements within the shell of their bubble.

Additionally, the common usage of the bubble to hide the owner’s inferiority actually results in a kind of thickening of the bubble’s shell, making it even more impregnable. Why? Because it is to everyone’s best interest that their bubbles be exempt from scrutiny. Everyone is hiding something that they don’t want anyone else to see. Therefore, no one examines anyone else’s bubble, because they don’t want others to examine their own bubble. Thus, by mutual consent, the shell of the bubble becomes very sacred and inviolable, which equates to making it thicker and more impregnable.

It is also important to note here that the bubble doesn’t really provide a *solution* for its owner’s sense of inferiority. It only allows him or her to *hide* the things that announce this inferiority. Therefore, the bubble doesn’t resolve this dilemma, it just allows the owner to better cope with it.

Another of the main protective functions of the bubble is to allow its owner to *cope with a sense of insecurity*. As mentioned above, all of us have things that we would like to hide and that clearly announce our inferiority. These things not only lead the owner of a bubble to live with a sense of inferiority, but they also lead this owner to live with a sense of insecurity. He or she knows that they don’t *deserve* to be absolute lord and master of their universe. And they know that they are not *capable* of faithfully exercising this degree of authority and control. And this causes a great degree of insecurity for them. However, since the bubble allows this individual to hide these embarrassing and undesirable elements, it also thus allows its owner to cope with (i.e., hide) the sense of insecurity that these elements bring.

Furthermore, the bubble offers a couple other traits that help bolster its owner’s sense of security. First, the fact that the owner is accountable to no one beyond himself or herself provides a degree of security. Who is going to accuse this owner? Who is going to condemn him or her? If they are satisfied with themselves, then what do they have to fear? And second, the rigidity and impregnability of the bubble’s shell increase the owner’s sense of security, just like a feudal lord inside a strong castle with very high walls and a very deep moat. No one can get inside this bubble (i.e., see what is hidden inside) unless the owner voluntarily decides to lower the drawbridge. Thus, the more rigid and impregnable the bubble’s shell, the more secure its owner feels. And this can lead to bubbles with *very* thick and rigid shells.

Once again, it is important to note here that the bubble doesn’t really provide a *solution* for its owner’s sense of insecurity. It only gives him or her a place behind tall and thick barriers where they can *hide* the things that cause this insecurity. It cannot make these things go away.

4.

The impact of democratized feudalism

In the previous chapter we described the poison of democratized feudalism. Numerous traits were highlighted that could negatively impact an individual, a church, a society, or a whole country. Now the time has come to examine more closely and in greater detail this potential negative impact. First we will analyze its general impact and then six specific impacts.

General impact

Strong bubbles. One of the key functions of the bubble is to protect its owner. For this reason, it tends to have a rigid and impregnable shell. Very little penetrates it, and it refuses to lose territory by flexing its shape. And the more that the bubble's owner feels threatened and insecure, the stronger the bubble will tend to be.

The problem is that the bubble provides too *much* protection for its owner. Without his or her consent, no one, not even God Himself, has the right to examine this individual and their bubble, question their opinions and ideas, and require changes and transformations. That is, at least according to the logic that prevails under the influence of this poison. Therefore, this poison (through the strong bubble that it generates) can easily result in insulating the owner from changes and modifications that God would like to make.

Individualistic bubbles. Since the owner of the bubble is the absolute and sovereign lord within this sphere, they do not have to justify anything to anyone. They don't have to ask permission of anybody, and they don't have to seek forgiveness from anyone. In fact, the rest of the population has very little to do with this individual's behavior and exercise of their feudal rights. They live in a very isolated kingdom (which, as we've seen, is necessary for *democratized* feudalism to exist, with its multitude of kingdoms in close proximity).

Thus, the bubble compartmentalizes things so much that it can permit the development of a very strong individualism within the same area where

a thousand other very strong individualists already live. It also uses this individualism to highlight the uniqueness of this particular bubble and owner, as distinct from the others. And, given the feudal competition between bubbles (feudal lords were always having jousts and tournaments to see who was the strongest and best), the bubble can even use this strong individualism to exalt and lift up this particular bubble and owner over the other surrounding bubbles and owners.

Furthermore, the bubble tends to be very individualistic because it tends not to wish to cooperate very much with other bubbles. Why? Because to achieve any degree of cooperation requires that the bubbles involved modify their shapes and permeability to permit the coincidence of thinking, goals, activities, etc. that underlies all true cooperation. But, as we've seen, this modification of shape and permeability implies either the surrender of sacred territory or the weakening of defenses, which goes directly against a traditional feudal mindset. Therefore, it is to the advantage of all bubble owners that their bubbles not get too close to each other. Within this feudal mindset, bubbles that are safe and sovereign are bubbles that are *rigid*, and rigid bubbles don't share space with other rigid bubbles. They're like marbles in a jar, each one occupying its own private space, each one being its own unique and individual sphere.

Egocentric bubbles. Since the owner of the bubble is absolute and sovereign lord within this sphere, everything tends to rotate around this individual. He or she is the center of their little universe. And to yield to a superior entity (such as God), or even to recognize the *existence* of a superior entity, tends to pose a serious threat to this owner's lordship and sovereignty. Of course, they generally do recognize the existence of superior entities such as God, the police, their boss at work, etc., but this recognition tends to be at a more *theoretical* level or in a more *restricted* scope. While in *reality* and within their *dominion*, at

least as far as is possible, these owners tend to live for themselves, following their own opinions and ideas.

Ineffective bubbles. As has been seen, one of the functions of the bubble is to allow its owner to hide their sense of inferiority within the private territory of this bubble. No one has the right to peer inside, detect, and judge either this feeling of inferiority or the elements that generate it. Furthermore, no one is going to accuse this owner of being inferior, because this would imply that someone has invaded this bubble to discover this fact, which would also imply the possibility of other bubbles being invaded, including that of the individual making the accusation. Basically, for security reasons, it is to everyone's best interest that all bubbles remain exempt from any examination, thus allowing their owners to hide their sense of inferiority and the elements that announce this inferiority and generate this feeling.

But hiding these feelings and elements does not equate with resolving them. The bubble cannot take away its owner's sense of inferiority, it only allows them a mechanism to cope with it. Nor can the bubble take away the dark truths that generate this sense of inferiority. In other words, the bubble cannot resolve the feelings of inferiority with which its owner lives. It only allows him or her to hide their inferiority from public view and perhaps forget it for a brief period. In some ways, it is similar to using alcoholic beverages to allow a person to cope with a problem at work. It can temporarily alleviate the impact of the problem, but it cannot make it go away. And too great a use of this coping mechanism can be very harmful to an individual's health.

Impact on the process of evaluation and correction

Since the owner of the bubble is sovereign, and since their bubble is impregnable (no one can get inside), it is almost impossible to make evaluations and corrections within a bubble context. Who is capable of judging this individual with regard to their behavior and work within their sphere? Only the owner themselves, and whoever they happen to permit inside their bubble, have the right to examine this private kingdom. And who can correct an absolute lord? By definition their ideas and opinions are sovereign, unless they happen to agree to yield their sovereignty to a superior entity (something that tends to go directly against a traditional feudal mindset).

And when people spend enough time within a bubble context, they tend not even to *expect* any

evaluation and/or correction. These are elements that are foreign to their context, and almost impossible to implement. And with time, the very implementation of these elements becomes almost inconceivable, except in the case of a *theoretical* implementation which presents no great risks, as long as the findings will never have any significant contact with the *real* world (we'll see more about this when we study the impact on teamwork and unity). Therefore, the evaluation process may be done, in *theory*, and the proper recommendations may be made with regard to corrections, again, in *theory*. But there will be very little actual expectation that any changes in *reality* will occur.

Impact on interpersonal relations

Please note that the following areas of specific impact refer to *tendencies*. In other words, the poison of democratized feudalism will predispose a person to behave in a certain fashion. The degree to which they behave in that fashion can then be used to gauge the degree with which they have been poisoned. And although different people will exhibit different tendencies, fortunately most will avoid going to a radically extreme position in many of these areas.

A tendency not to accept the help of others. The owner of a bubble tends not to accept the help of other persons (not even God Himself). Rather, this owner and their kingdom are seen as self-sufficient. In fact, admitting that they even need help is essentially equal to admitting their inferiority and sacrificing their sovereignty by opening themselves up to the help and suggestions of others.

With reference to this process of opening oneself up, Octavio Paz (a famous Mexican philosopher who analyzed the Mexican psyche, and whose analyses oftentimes may be applied in a general way across much of Latin America) points out the following regarding the Mexican ideal of manliness: "The idea of 'manliness' consists of never opening oneself up or surrendering oneself to others. Those who open themselves up are cowards. For us, contrary to what happens in other cultures, opening ourselves up is seen as a weakness or as treason.... The one who does this is untrustworthy, a traitor, or a man of doubtful faithfulness that ... is incapable of facing up to the dangers of life as he ought."⁴⁰ Therefore, this type of a person does not want for others to know that they need any help. They *must* be self-sufficient.

A tendency to live isolated from the rest.

The owner of a bubble tends to look for an arrangement where they can live with their bubble in peace and freedom. But with a thousand bubbles surrounding them, the constant contact between rigid bubbles generates friction. Therefore, the owner seeks out some kind of isolation that will help avoid this friction. This isolation generally is not so much geographical as psychological, emotional, and/or social. Thus, the owner tends to withdraw and desires to work *alone*, even when surrounded by people. They desire to work *alone*, even when they form a part of a team.

And this tendency toward isolation is only strengthened by the fact that the owner's sovereignty *requires* isolation. In order to be sovereign, he or she must also be invulnerable (as was seen in the previous point), and to be invulnerable, the owner must withdraw and enclose themselves within their protective bubble. Octavio Paz noted this trait when he observed that "the person who is 'macho' is someone who is hermetically sealed within themselves... Manliness is measured by a person's invulnerability to the weapons of an enemy or to the impacts of the outside world."⁴¹ And upon sealing themselves up in their protective bubble, this owner isolates themselves from the other bubbles and from other people.

A tendency to form their personal version of the truth. The owner of a bubble tends to form their own individualistic version or perception of the truth. For example, Bible verses that support this owner's personal position and opinion are easily brought inside the bubble, while those that contradict it are simply left outside, and are "not applicable" to this situation and context. In other words, this second group of verses does not form a part of this owner's "truth." And as a consequence, God and the Bible, instead of being used to examine, judge, and transform this owner's position and opinion, are more commonly employed as "evangelical artillery" aimed at *protecting* this individual, their territory, and their sovereignty.

This individualistic perception of the truth also has a tendency to insulate individuals from the other members of a larger group. To illustrate the impact that this can have on interpersonal relations, let's use the example of a church that has an excellent missions statement. This missions statement ought to serve as the focal point for practically all the activity of this church, and each member ought to align their activities so that they support the fulfillment of this missions statement. But, if each church member has the right to interpret this mission statement according to their individualistic bubble, and accept only those ele-

ments that easily fit with their bubble's concept of truth, then we easily can end up with as many versions of this missions statement as there are members in this church. And each member will tend to uphold their own individualistic version, and not cooperate with others who see the mission statement in a different light. To do anything else would require that this individual sacrifice their personal and individual sovereignty as owner of their bubble.

A tendency to seek to obligate God and others to respect this owner's lordship. The owner of a bubble tends to seek to obligate God and others to respect this individual's lordship as owner of their bubble. Since this owner sees their individualistic version of the truth as the only truly correct version (at least within the sphere of their bubble), then this owner expects that the rest will support him or her in their opinions (at least within the sphere of this owner's bubble).

And, due to the fact that this owner's particular ministry oftentimes is carried out within the sphere of their bubble (and this is especially true if they happen to be the leader or director of this ministry), then this owner will tend to *require* that the rest who work with him or her agree with them and follow their decisions and desires as lord of the bubble where this ministry exists. Also, they may employ multiple techniques to coerce the rest to follow the will of this ministry's "lord." Without external restraints (and who can restrain a sovereign lord?), this could easily lead to a very unhealthy and abusive interpersonal situation. This brings us to the next point.

A tendency to become rapidly intolerant, especially when the owner's bubble is threatened. The owner of a bubble many times tries to project the image of being a very tolerant person (among other reasons, because he or she desires that others also tolerate his or her particular bubble). But, when their bubble is threatened, and we have seen that this can occur due to many different factors, this owner has the tendency to become rapidly intolerant, and sometimes *very* intolerant. Why? Because any threat to their bubble is a threat to their personal sovereignty and a threat to disclose their sense of inferiority (which is hidden in their bubble but not resolved). Actually, due to the continual jousting, bumping, and friction between bubbles, it appears that the owner of a bubble tends to have difficulty tolerating *any* person with a bubble, behavior, and/or ideas significantly different from their own.

A tendency to live as if the rest existed

only for the benefit of this owner. The owner of a bubble tends to live as if the rest of the people existed only for the benefit of this owner. He or she is king of their domain, and the rest are just their subjects. He or she is sovereign, and the rest ought to respect this fact and live according to this reality.

As can be seen, this is an extension of the feudal system, where the vassals lived for and served their lord, and achieved their sense of importance, grandeur, wealth, and sufficiency from the importance, grandeur, wealth, and sufficiency of their lord. In a very general sense, these vassals were viewed as “raw material” to be mined and milled for the benefit of their lord, and for the secondary benefit of these same vassals (since they also benefitted from any increase in their lord’s position).

Once again, without external restrictions, this could easily lead to a very unhealthy and abusive interpersonal situation. For example, a missionary, who by the very *nature* of their office ought to serve and represent their sending churches, can end up actually demanding that these churches serve them. If and when this happens, and I have seen it happen many times, this individual has actually *denied* the very meaning of the word “missionary” (which is “an ambassador,” “a representative,” a person sent to represent others and therefore accountable to them for the fidelity and fluidity of that representation). And having denied the meaning of the word, they have ceased to be a true missionary.

A tendency to “cooperate” by leading, teaching, and lording it over others, instead of listening to, learning from, and serving others. The owner of a bubble tends to desire to lead, teach, and lord it over others, instead of listening to, learning from, and serving others. Once again, this owner is a feudal lord, and his or her basic responsibility is: to be *lord*. And what does a feudal lord do? They lead, teach (communicate information that is received and accepted by their vassals), and lord it over their subjects. But very seldom does the feudal lord *serve* their subjects as a servant. Rather, their subjects exist to serve them as lord. As Octavio Paz says, “the only thing that matters is manliness, the personal courage that enables an individual to assert himself and their authority over others.”⁴²

And what about learning and listening? These are activities that communicate a need to *receive* help from others, and we have already seen that such a communication basically is tantamount to admitting that this owner is inadequate (they lack something), insufficient (they need to listen to and

learn from *others*), and vulnerable (they have opened themselves up by making this confession). Once again, the bubble’s sense of sovereignty and its sense and fear of inferiority will tend to seriously block any such confession on the part of its owner.

Especially in the world of cross-cultural missions, and in many other contexts as well, this trait can create a very unhealthy and egotistical interpersonal situation, filled with ethnocentrism (the belief that the owner’s race, people, culture, lifestyle, etc. is the best or most appropriate). When this happens, instead of teaching the Bible, there is a strong tendency to teach the culture (the behavioral patterns) and the bubble of this owner. This duplicates bubbles, but it doesn’t multiply Christian disciples. In missions, the missionary, by the very nature of his or her office, must learn from, listen to, and serve others. *If they fail at this, they have disqualified themselves from being a good missionary.*

A tendency to hide sin and errors. The owner of a bubble tends to hide their sin and errors (many times inside the boundaries of their bubble). Similarly to what we have seen with regard to asking for help, or learning and listening, when the owner of a bubble admits or recognizes his or her sins and errors, it is tantamount to admitting their inferiority and vulnerability. Therefore, their sense of sovereignty and their sense and fear of inferiority and insecurity will tend to prevent this owner from recognizing fault (sins and errors). And this can have a huge impact on interpersonal relations. Why? Since they have so much difficulty in recognizing and admitting their sins and errors, then this makes it very hard for this individual to recognize when they have offended another person and admit it. And since they have difficulty telling when they have offended another, then it makes it very difficult to know when they need to ask for forgiveness of others. Without the freedom and ability to ask for and receive forgiveness (both of which require that the individual recognize their fault), healthy interpersonal relationships cannot exist for very long.

Impact on teamwork and unity

A tendency to work isolated from the rest. As we have seen already, the owner of a bubble tends to seek out a situation where they can live with their bubble in relative peace and freedom, and this tends to generate a certain isolation and/or insulation between bubbles and individuals. Obviously, this isolation and insula-

tion will have negative repercussions in group unity and general teamwork. Due to the traits of the bubble, instead of having a solid, united group, or a true team, it is more common to have a *gathering of individuals working in an isolated and insulated fashion, but in geographical proximity.*

A tendency to reinterpret the group's mission and vision according to the individualistic perspective of this person's bubble. Once again, as we have already seen, the owner of a bubble tends to interpret the vision and mission of their organization according to the individualistic bubble of this owner. As such, they accept what fits with their bubble and they ignore the rest. And, as owner of the bubble, their personal and individual interpretation of this vision and mission is *sovereign* within their sphere. And the rest had better respect it, because this owner has no real reason to change their opinion. Therefore, we can easily end up with a situation where we have as many versions of the organization's vision and mission as we have members in that organization.

Since the group's vision and mission statements were designed specifically to provide unity and direction to the group's activities, this multiplicity of equally valid and sovereign interpretations (all of which occur within the corresponding spheres of these individuals) really cuts the heart out of this group. Instead of unity and common direction, there are disunity, discord, and dispersion, with each member wanting to work only with those who share his or her particular version of the group's vision and mission (and this subgroup can tend to be quite small, due to the bubble's individualism). Perhaps this is one of the reasons why, as we saw in the opening section of this study, Latin American missionaries are more than three times as likely to be dismissed by their missions agency, compared to worldwide averages.

A tendency to resist forming and applying job descriptions. The owner of a bubble tends not to expect that he or she will receive a detailed job description, where a central sponsoring entity (such as a missions board, local church congregation, or team leadership) has defined and set limits with regard to what the person filling this position should either do or not do. The formation of a job description like this would be a violation of this individual's sovereignty and a serious insult to their lordship. That is, unless this job description were only to be applied at a *theoretical* level, with little real impact on daily reality.

Thus, when working with Latin American teams or ministries, many times a person may join a group without receiving any specific job descrip-

tion or much information with regard to concrete expectations from the central sponsoring entity. For example, you may be named director of a ministry, and find out that there is no specific job description covering what you should and should not do in that position. You probably also will find out that there is no specific job description covering what those that work under your supervision in this ministry should be doing. Rather, each individual is granted a large degree of freedom to do what seems best to them, given the circumstances. And this holds true even in the more structured ministries like formal theological education. Here, you may be assigned to teach a course, but many times you will not receive much in the way of a detailed course description that lists the topics you should cover in your lectures. More commonly, you'll be given broad latitude to include the topics that seem most important to you as professor. Although this may sometimes be referred to as "being flexible" and "giving the Spirit freedom to work," it also is respecting the sovereignty and autonomy of each team member, ministry member, professor, etc.

This trait can lead to a lack of ministry continuity and wide swings in ministry emphasis and activity, as each new entering lord chooses to follow their own path (and thus affirm and exhibit their sovereignty and autonomy). In fact, this may be one of the key reasons why our churches are experiencing difficulty in developing *permanent* and *lasting* ministries.

IMPORTANT: please note that this does *not* mean that there is no direction, structure, organization, or planning in Latin American teams, ministries, theological education, etc. Everything is *not* just done "willy nilly." Direction, structure, organization and planning *do* all exist, *but they are done according to the paradigm or worldview of democratized feudalism.* And what does this mean? As we have seen, this worldview says that each person has a right to be a lord in their specific context. Therefore, they are granted the maximum amount of sovereignty and autonomy permissible within the overall context. However, practically all feudal lords were also vassals in other contexts, as well (serving higher lords). So although the ordinary team member may be a lord in their *specific* context (and thus have a certain amount of sovereignty and autonomy), they also are *vassals* of the team leader, who is the larger lord in the *broader* team context. Since one of the vassal's traditional responsibilities is to depend upon their lord, then these team members will depend upon the team leader to provide the overarching direction, structure, organization, and plans under which they will function within the

team context. Something very similar also holds true for ministry directors and ministry members, department heads and professors, etc. The higher lord in the general context sets the direction, structure, organization, and planning within his or her ministry area. However, many times these intermediate lords have even higher lords above them. Thus the team leader has their area supervisor, the ministry director has their pastor, the department head has their academic dean, and so forth. So these intermediate lords look to these higher lords to provide the *global* direction, structure, organization, and planning that they will follow as they plan for and lead their own groups. So there is a rather sophisticated system for setting direction, structure, organization, and plans in this context.

Then if this is true, what is the problem with operating this way? The basic problem is that this feudal paradigm is *individual* centered instead of *idea* centered. The higher lords (individuals) basically set the path (ideas) for those serving under their supervision, and these vassals concentrate more on following the individual than the idea. This tends to create at least seven potentially serious problems. *First, it tends to promote loyalty to an individual instead of ownership of an idea.* A vassal's loyalty is principally to their lord, and then to what their lord has developed. Therefore, their acceptance of the direction, structure, organization, and plans of this ministry or team is based more on *who* developed them than on *what* these ideas represent. As a consequence, *second, it tends to promote a short-term commitment to an individual instead of a long-term commitment and dedication to an idea.* Ideas, when they are well conceived, are very durable and long lasting, and can be worthy of a life's dedication. Individuals, on the other hand, tend to have a limited ministry life span, and sometimes it can be as short as just a couple of years or even less. Because of this, *third, it tends to result in stressing short-term planning instead of long-term planning.* If the key lords that set direction, structure, organization, and plans are going to change every two, four, or six years, then how can you possibly make a 15- or 20-year long-term plan? It is impossible to know where you might be headed by that time. *Fourth, it tends to promote following instead of analyzing and accepting.* Loyalty to a person leads to following an individual wherever they choose to go, but ownership of an idea is based upon analyzing that idea and then accepting it as your own. In the first, you are following more the convictions of another. In the second, you are following more your own convictions. *Fifth, it tends to result in following the human instead of the divine.* Leaders, no matter

how godly, are still human and therefore subject to human frailties. But ideas and principles, when proceeding directly from God's Word, are divine. *Sixth, it tends to result in overlooking the broader gifts of the body.* Basically, only the key lords are involved in decision making and strategy. The vassals mostly just follow. But what if the key lords aren't gifted in the areas necessary for casting vision, direction, structure, organization, etc.? What if they aren't gifted in the area of articulation and communication of their vision, direction, organization, etc.? And what if the vassals are gifted in these areas but are overlooked? Then gifted and capable vassals may be left frustrated with inadequately developed plans and programs, or they may be left groping in the dark, not knowing what their leader wants to do or where he or she wants to take this ministry. And *seventh, it tends to result in seriously overburdening the key lords.* They are responsible for vision, direction, strategy, decision making, organization, starting and overseeing implementation, etc. Very quickly, the ministry begins to bottleneck around these key lords, causing them to try even harder. Before long, they are running a serious risk of becoming very frustrated and very burned out.

Before leaving this topic, we should mention one more observation about job descriptions in a Latin American setting. Given the poisons of activism and passivity, these job descriptions can sometimes be applied in a surprisingly strict and intense way, almost completely setting aside the individual's sovereignty and autonomy. As will be seen when we study these poisons, this is largely due to trying to adopt and apply programs and systems taken from other contexts, but without an adequate understanding of the truths, lifestyle, and spiritual, relational, and ministerial liberties that underlie a successful implementation of these programs and systems. In other words, someone reads in a book on church organization about the importance and role of job descriptions, and they decide to imitate the behavior (actions) described in the book, but without achieving an adequate understanding of all the elements that underlie a successful implementation. Therefore, they reproduce the actions, but interpreted from a radically different worldview (i.e., interpreting them as a feudal lord). And what was designed to be helpful and constructive criticism in another context can end up becoming unhealthy and damaging lord-to-vassal demands and requirements in this context. Please note that the improper application of a job description can be as destructive, or more so, than just ignoring the job description all together.

A tendency to avoid long-range planning

and formation of strategies. The owner of a bubble tends not to develop much of a long-range ministerial plan or strategy (for example, one that contemplates projects and ministries over the next 15 to 30 years). These types of plans are very important for the development of a fruitful team, but the lack of continuity described in the previous point presents a serious obstacle to this type of plan and strategy. Why go to all the trouble and expense (both in finances and manpower) to develop something like this if everything is going to change drastically when another director assumes this ministry in two years? Long-range planning requires dedication to a well-conceived, long-lasting *idea* instead of to an individual.

Furthermore, long-range planning means that we must *restrict* the sovereignty of all the people that will work with this team for the next 20 to 30 years. They are going to enter the team with the plan already made that they will need to follow. But, very few owners of a bubble will want to be placed in this type of a position. Therefore, if we are working with bubble owners, there will also be a tendency away from developing long-range plans because they are too restrictive and limiting. Of course, they could safely be developed at a *theoretical* level, as long as there was no serious chance of a thorough application in reality. But even that would be a waste of time and effort, given the lack of continuity.

In summary, democratized feudalism can seriously hinder the development and implementation of long-range plans and strategies for a team or a ministry (and this can sometimes even apply to such long-range documents as doctrinal statements, the organization's mission and vision statements, and other similar documents). This type of planning requires that the members of the group *submit to*, be *accountable for*, and be *firmly committed to follow a plan* (an *idea*) instead of an individual.

A tendency to evaluate an individual strongly based on the basic code of feudalism, where the vassal owes dependency, loyalty, and service to his or her lord. When evaluations are done within a paradigm or worldview of democratized feudalism, the tendency is to base the evaluation strongly on the basic code of feudalism, where the individual's dependency on, loyalty to, and service to the leader is of primary importance and their performance of the team's plan is more secondary. Yes, there is a team plan or ministry plan that needs to be carried out. As we have seen, it probably was created by the team leader or ministry director as intermediate lord, under the global vision and direction provided by

the area leader or pastor. But the feudal paradigm says that *dependence on*, *loyalty to*, and *service to* these lords tends to carry greater weight than the actual fulfillment of these lords' concrete plans (and please note that *servicing* these lords does not have to be strictly synonymous with *fulfilling* the plans that they have designed).

Therefore, dependence, loyalty, and service will tend to be the key elements analyzed. Performance will tend to be secondary. And a strong showing in dependence, loyalty, and service will tend to overshadow a poor performance. Therefore, this evaluation process may not provide a lot of detailed information on how well a person is actually performing their tasks. Unfortunately, without this information, there is no objective way to really know if this person has accomplished their work well or not. Thus there is little base for helping improve this person's performance in the future, and there is little way to judge if these team members actually work together well as a team, or whether one should be assigned to another team or another ministry area. Objective information on performance is needed for these types of decisions. Now of course, dependence, loyalty, and service are important, and team members should have a healthy form and degree of each of these. But there are also other important factors that need to be taken into account when evaluations are made.

A tendency to develop a mentality that is more pragmatic than ethical. The owner of a bubble tends to develop a mentality that is more pragmatic than ethical, where achieving success (reaching the objectives) tends to be more important than fulfilling externally applied norms and opinions, including those that come from God. Furthermore, this mindset also says that if this person is successful, then no one can really criticize his or her norms and opinions because they have been validated by this success.

This tendency is due in part to the emphasis that the bubble places upon doing activities instead of transforming lifestyles (in other words, an emphasis upon doing instead of being). It gets this from the poison of activism. And this tendency is also due in part to the emphasis that the bubble puts on the sovereignty of its owner's opinions and ideas, where this individual does not have to fulfill the opinions and norms of others. *Please notice that, with regard to unity and teamwork, this tendency means that a bubble owner could encounter significant difficulty in following the norms and plans established by his or her team, especially if they happen to think that they can achieve better or more rapid success by following another route.*

Furthermore, due to this tendency, a bubble owner runs the risk of behaving in a rather inconsistent manner, especially if he or she is examined according to a more non-bubble context (for example, more than 90% of the evangelical missionary work force is based in a context that is not nearly so bubble oriented as our Latin American context, thus making our missionaries on international teams much more likely to be evaluated from a more non-bubble viewpoint⁴³). From the viewpoint of one of these less-bubble-oriented contexts, this bubble owner first follows one path, and then another, and then even another. And all these paths may seem to lack any real connection between them, and they may even appear to be contradictory. Why then is this bubble owner following this kind of strategy? Because this person tends to zero in on the desired end result, and not pay so much attention to how they might get there. Thus, the paths used do not have to have any significant relation among themselves, except for the fact that they all offer to lead this person to the desired end. Now, from the viewpoint of a less-bubble-oriented team, this person lacks the stability and focus that come from following *external* rules and norms that are based in *others* (such as a team plan developed by the team leadership). And this lack of stability and focus can have fairly negative repercussions within this team, and especially for this Latin American member.

A tendency to work as “economically” as possible. The owner of a bubble tends to have an “economical” mindset. They tend to look for the greatest degree of success with the minimum degree of effort and expense. Although this may be positive to a certain point, they run the risk of going too far in that direction. For example, they may look for the maximum degree of divine blessing with only the minimum necessary investment on their part. This is partly due to the fact that their bubble predisposes them to think in the more pragmatic terms of activities and success (as we just saw in the previous point). Add to this the fact that the poison of passivity will also predispose them to seek to work through substitutes, and to adopt or “expropriate” programs and systems that have been developed by others instead of going through the slow and costly process of developing these programs and systems themselves. And thirdly, add the fact that, as we have already seen, the bubble owner displays a certain tendency to live as if the rest of the group basically existed for his or her benefit. The combination of these three, within the context of a team and teamwork, can tend to generate a situation that could become abusive, even to the point where the bubble owner

might end up seizing or “expropriating” the efforts and successes of other team members, economizing his or her own resources and becoming “rich” at the expense of others. Obviously, this would not promote the development of a healthy team.

A tendency not to develop a true sense of unity and teamwork. The owner of a bubble tends to have difficulty in developing a true sense of unity and teamwork. This is because the bubble owner tends to interpret the general goal of the team according to his or her own individualistic bubble, and then expect the rest to respect his or her sovereign ideas and opinions. And if there happens to be more than one bubble owner on the team, then multiple team members could behave this way, producing a plurality of equally valid opinions with no one yielding to achieve unity. They simply don’t coincide on enough points to form unity (again, two rigid spheres cannot occupy the same space, and how much more so if there are five or ten rigid spheres in the group). So, rather than achieving unity, each team member who is also a bubble owner will tend to reserve their deepest loyalty for their own personal interpretation of the group’s goals. Of course, they will all *theoretically* say that they want to be a full and dedicated member of this team, but it appears that the *true* reality many times is quite different from this *theoretical* reality. In cases like this, the most that the team can hope for, apart from the transformation of these bubble owners, is to achieve a certain degree of *tolerance* within the group. But this is a far cry from having a truly united team where all work wholeheartedly toward goals that are truly held in common by each member.

A tendency not to develop a high degree of commitment with the team’s work. The owner of a bubble tends to have difficulty in developing a high degree of commitment with the team’s work. Once again, they don’t coincide enough with the group’s plan and ministries (unless they happened to be the one who designed them). So, they reserve their deepest loyalty not for the team’s plan, but for their interpretation of this plan.

And what happens if the bubble owner happens to be the one who designed this team plan? In this case, they *will* coincide greatly with this plan because they developed it from the perspective of their bubble and it fits very well within this bubble. Therefore, they also will feel a high level of commitment with this plan. But if the rest of the group is also bubble owners, then they will all reserve their deepest loyalties for *their* interpretations of this individual’s plan. And thus we lose

the high commitment level and unity again.

A tendency either to seek to be the leader of the team, or to withdraw from the team due to their inability to submit to another's leadership. When the owner of a bubble is in a team setting, and especially in a team of persons who operate according to a more non-bubble worldview, one of two things tends to happen sooner or later. Either they will rise to the leadership of this team, insisting that the rest follow them and their bubble, or they will withdraw from the team because they cannot submit to the leadership of others (and especially to those who do not evidence the typical desired qualities of leadership as defined by the bubble, i.e., a strong feudal leadership). It is interesting, but when the second option occurs, it appears that many times this individual will withdraw from the team blaming the others for not being able to cooperate with him or her, when it was really the opposite.

And what happens if this bubble owner is on a team where *all* the members are bubble owners? As we have seen, this team will tend to be a group of isolated and insulated individuals, each one following their own version of the team's goal and plan. But even then, the constant competition to find out who is the principal feudal lord, plus the continuous bumping and scraping of so many rigid bubbles in such proximity, eventually will tend to produce enough friction to divide this "team" that never truly was a team.

Impact on leadership

The bubble tends to have various harmful consequences with regard to leadership.⁴⁴

A tendency to develop an inconsistent leadership. The owner of a bubble tends to behave more as a *pragmatic* leader than as an *ethical* leader. A pragmatic leader tends to choose what to do based more upon whether or not this particular option offers a fairly direct route to their goal. This leader wants to get to their goal as *quickly* as possible, and the issues of how they achieve this task are secondary. Thus, the pragmatic leader tends to focus on *efficient* options, options that offer a direct and economical route to their goal. On the other hand, an ethical leader tends to choose what to do based more upon external norms, many times developed by others. This leader is more concerned about achieving their goal in the *proper fashion*, and the issues of speed and efficiency are secondary. Thus, the ethical leader tends to focus on *correct* or *proper* options, options that agree with a set of external norms.

Since these external norms provide an independent structure to guide the decision making process, the ethical leader tends to make decisions that are more consistent and that form a more coherent whole. This means that this leader also tends to provide a more coherent and consistent overall leadership. On the other hand, following their bubble's emphasis on personal sovereignty and autonomy, the pragmatic leader tends to reject the imposition of external norms, and prefers to make decisions that are more isolated and individual, and perhaps even inconsistent. Consequently, their leadership tends to fluctuate considerably and may change direction abruptly and drastically at any time. One day, a certain behavior is perfectly acceptable; but the next day it could be frowned upon or perhaps even punished. One day, a certain path may be the correct one; but the next day the correct path could be in a completely different direction. And people working under the leadership of this type of an individual tend not to know what to expect from day to day.

A tendency to create an unstable environment. Given that the owner of a bubble tends to be the type of a leader that can fluctuate widely, then the environment created by that leadership can tend to be unstable. And interestingly enough, this leader may actually *prefer* this instability, due to the sense of inferiority and insecurity caused by their bubble. A leader who is also a bubble owner needs to feel secure in their job position. And one of the mechanisms employed to achieve this security is to generate or promote a general sense of instability in the work environment. By doing this, this leader can portray themselves as the only one who can possibly save their company, their ministry, their church, etc. Here is how it works: this instability tends to create a high level of *dependency* upon this leader (everything will fail without him or her), making this individual *indispensable* in this context (everything depends upon him or her), and thus, this leader is safely entrenched in their position. Although it may seem to be a contradiction, the more *instability* there is in this leader's context, the more *stability* this insecure leader feels.

A tendency to postpone making an unpopular decision. For a leader who is also the owner of a bubble, making unpopular decisions can be very risky due to the inferiority and insecurity that they feel, thanks to their bubble. Unpopular decisions threaten their security in their job position. Thus, they tend to postpone making any unpopular decision until there is a crisis of sufficient magnitude to warrant the risk. In other

words, the crisis has to be of such magnitude that it *eclipses* the unpopularity of this decision. And since the need to make unpopular decisions tends to surface with some regularity, this means that those who follow this leader tend to live with a continuous series of crises (and the more unpopular the decision, the greater the crisis). Unfortunately, this doesn't tend to provide the stable environment necessary to develop a healthy company, ministry, church, etc.

A tendency to avoid situations that are charged with emotion, conflict, and discipline. For the bubble-owner leader, these types of situations tend to lead to events that can call their leadership into question, and thus can be very threatening. For example, if this leader needs to discipline someone under their supervision, this action basically is equivalent to an open confession that someone under their leadership messed up. And this could be interpreted as a sign that their *leadership* messed up. Thanks to the feelings of insecurity and inferiority generated by the bubble, this leader will then tend to avoid disciplining subordinates, at least until there is a crisis of sufficient magnitude to warrant the risk that this action will create (very similar to what was seen in the point above).

A tendency to resist any questioning of this individual's authority, ability, leadership, etc. Since the bubble gives this leader a sense of inferiority and insecurity, as well as a very strong sense of personal sovereignty and autonomy, it can be very threatening to this individual to allow *anyone* to question his or her authority, ability, training, job history, decisions, etc. Once again, this is a direct attack on their security in their job position and on their sovereignty and autonomy. Therefore, as much as is possible, this leader will try to avoid *all* such risky activity (and this includes filling out a job evaluation). And any subordinate who dares to participate in any activity like these is running serious risk of being expelled from the company, ministry, church, etc.

A tendency to attack, destroy, ridicule, and make fun of others so that this individual is seen as the best possible leader. For the insecure bubble-owner leader, and especially for one that has risen to their current job position by seizing or "expropriating" the work of others and passing it off as his or her own contribution (as we have already seen in our analysis of the bubble), it simply is too risky to base their job position on their own merits and accomplishments. And this is only logical, since the merits and accomplish-

ments that led to their current job position did not come from them, but from others. In cases like this, what can this leader do to look like a good leader? Instead of making an honest evaluation of their own qualities and those of their leadership, this leader tends to attack, destroy, ridicule, and make fun of other leaders and their leadership, so that he or she appears to be the best, *but without having to go through any actual analysis of their abilities and job history*. In short, it is a case of looking like the best leader, not because of an accurate assessment of their merits, abilities, or history, but because of minimizing the merits, abilities, and history of all the other potential candidates.

A tendency to strongly protect his or her territory and vassals. Following the feudal viewpoint of their bubble, this leader tends to strongly protect his or her territory and vassals, so that no one takes them away from this leader. And what is their territory? Their company, their department, their ministry, their church, all of these are examples of possible territories. Basically, it is the area where this leader exercises his or her leadership. And who are their vassals? They are the people who work under this leadership. And following the feudal viewpoint of the bubble, these vassals are part of this leader's "wealth." They are the raw materials for this leader's greatness. Therefore, to lose them to another would mean that this other leader is becoming "wealthy" at the expense of *this* leader, and this possibility does not sit well with anyone involved in feudal competition.

A tendency to control, dominate, and keep his or her vassals in subjugation. A feudal lord, rather than equipping, elevating, and helping his or her vassals to achieve their own maximum potential, tends rather to control, dominate, and keep these vassals in subjugation. This lord wants to keep them in their place as raw material that contributes to his or her greatness as feudal lord. Furthermore, allowing them to achieve their maximum potential tends to be rather threatening for this leader, because these vassals could rapidly switch from raw material to competition. One must bear in mind that many feudal lords died at the hands of those who were once their friends and had served under their lordship. Therefore, from the feudal viewpoint of the bubble, *the success of this leader and the success of those who serve under him or her tend to be seen as being in competition*.

A tendency to sacrifice his or her vassals,

when required for the security of the leader.

As we have seen, the feudal viewpoint of the bubble tends to cause this leader to live as if the rest of the people under them (their vassals) exist basically for his or her personal benefit. Therefore, if these vassals happen to create too much competition for this leader, or if they happen to obstruct his or her greatness in some fashion, or simply if sacrificing them happens to be convenient for this leader (for example, to have a scapegoat when something goes wrong), then this leader can find themselves in a position where they will tend to sacrifice these vassals, providing that this will contribute to strengthening the security of this leader.

A tendency to duplicate copies of their bubble. The leader who is also the owner of a bubble tends to live in such a way so as to duplicate copies of his or her bubble. For example, if this leader is called upon to teach their followers (and what leader doesn't have an opportunity to instruct their followers?), he or she will lean more toward communicating and teaching the content of their personal *bubble* than a body of more ethical content based upon external norms such as the Bible. This is due in part to their individualized version of personal truth and what matters most. In general terms, then, we can say that this leader tends to clone their bubble and then try to place these cloned bubbles over their followers. And this practice also fits very well with the pragmatic bent of this leader, because cloning bubbles and placing them over others appears to be the fastest and most efficient way to achieve followers who think identically to their leader. Thus, the bubble tends to breed copies of itself.

Impact on teaching and discipleship

A tendency to view the growth of others as a threat. As was mentioned above, a leader or a teacher who is also the owner of a bubble tends to view the growth of others (especially their vassals) as a threat. As teacher, he or she is the feudal lord in this context, and their students are their vassals. And the viewpoint of the bubble says that the success of this lord and the success of these vassals are in competition. Therefore, if our teachers respond according to their bubbles, they will prefer that their students not achieve too much success. In other words, they will prefer that their students not really reach their maximum potential. Why? Because these students are the raw material for this teacher's greatness, and raw material should never eclipse its teacher. And if a

student *does* begin to look like serious competition, this teacher can actually come to the point of sacrificing this student (through ridiculing them in front of the class, through refusing to sign that they have successfully completed the class, through changing the class time so that it meets at a time when this individual can no longer continue attending, etc.), so that this teacher may maintain their security as official instructor of this group.

A tendency to teach his or her bubble rather than biblical content. Just as we saw above with the leader, a teacher who is also the owner of a bubble tends to teach in such a way so as to duplicate copies of their bubble. In other words, what is taught tends to be more the instructor's personal bubble (their opinions and personal beliefs) than a body of ethical content based upon the Bible. Again, an instructor with a bubble tends to be more pragmatic than ethical. What is important is to reach their goal, and how they go about this is secondary. Since cloning bubbles and placing these cloned bubbles over their students appears to be the fastest way to achieve students that think identically to their teacher, then this instructor tends to lean toward this efficient solution. However, this is not education, it is just simply duplication. True education looks for the actual *transformation* of the student, not just the *duplication* of behavioral patterns that are isolated from the ethical content that underlies them.

A tendency to emphasize accomplishing activities rather than transforming lives. The teacher with a bubble runs the risk of placing more emphasis on the accomplishment of activities than on the transformation of lives. This is due in part to cross-poisoning from the poison of activism, which places more emphasis on doing than on being, and actually believes that the best way to become is through doing. Thus, the stress on *activity* as versus *being*. This also is due in part to the pragmatic bent of this instructor, where it is more important to reach their goal, and how they go about it is secondary. Combining these two tendencies, if the goal is to accomplish certain activities (as is the predisposition caused by activism), then our instructors may be expected to look for the fastest way to reach this goal. Unfortunately, very seldom will this rapid path include the *comprehension* and *application* of what is taught. This tends to be too slow a path.

Therefore, if our goal for the class is to have 20 students attend (and please note the emphasis on *activity*), then this instructor could feel very satisfied with just having 20 warm bodies in the room, regardless of the level of comprehension and appli-

cation of the subject matter. They are following the fast track to their goal. But how could an instructor truly feel satisfied achieving only this? *It is because the comprehension and application of the content never really was their goal.*

Or if the goal for the class is to have the students all complete and turn in their assignments (again, please note the emphasis on *activity*), then this instructor could feel very satisfied with simply receiving the proper number of homework assignments each class, regardless of whether or not these assignments actually have resulted in the transformation of lives. They are again following the fast track to their goal. And how could an instructor truly feel satisfied achieving only this? *It is because the transformation of lives never really was their goal.*

A tendency to emphasize the announcement of truth rather than its application. The teacher with a bubble also runs the risk of placing more emphasis on the announcement of truth than on its application. Once again, this is due in part to cross-poisoning from activism, which places more emphasis on doing than on being. Announcing the truth is doing. Applying the truth is being. Therefore, the announcement of truth will tend to win out over its application. And, since activism also believes that the best way to become is through doing, then the announcement of this truth will be sufficient, because it is believed that it will almost automatically (and magically) lead to application.

This tendency also is strengthened by the bubble's stress on sovereignty and autonomy. Within the bubble world, where every individual is sovereign and no one has the right to examine anyone else, it is actually *incorrect* to expect any true transformation. To do this would be a violation of this individual's sovereignty. Therefore, it is also *incorrect* to expect any real application of biblical truths. Of course, these teachers can *talk* about expecting transformations (as long as they are speaking at the theoretical level), and their comments may sound very healthy. But, honestly, what do they *truly* expect at the real level of life? Do they truly *expect* a transformation? Those that teach according to the bubble simply cannot expect this. And if they can't expect it, how can they possibly have it as their goal? Therefore, for a teacher with a bubble, all that remains to them is to lean toward the mere announcement of biblical truths. And when they have achieved this, they have achieved their goal.

A tendency to reverse the process of instruction. The teacher with a bubble tends to

run the risk of reversing the process of instruction. Once again, this is due in part to a case of cross-poisoning from activism, which says that doing leads to being. It also is due to the previous point that stresses the announcement of truth instead of its application.

Therefore, our training programs, constructed inside a bubble world and by bubble individuals, are predisposed to see the achievement of the desired behavioral patterns (*activities* such as attending the class, turning in assignments, and announcing biblical truths) as the *mechanism* to achieve the transformation of life that really underlies these activities. In other words, we are doing something in order to develop the Christlike nature that actually underlies the accomplishment of that activity. And this is backwards.

For example, our training programs can begin by asking our students to do activities that are typical of people who work in unity. And by having these students reproduce these activities, the program may believe that it is actually developing a spirit of unity in these students. When this happens, our programs have begun to reverse the process of instruction because they are *beginning* by emphasizing what more appropriately should be considered as the *final fruit* of this training.

Biblically speaking, good works (such as working together in unity) are the *fruit* that flows from a corresponding earlier transformation that the Holy Spirit has done in our lives, instead of being the *cause* of this transformation (see Jesus' comments to the Pharisees in Matt. 15:18-19 and 23:23-28). In other words, biblically speaking, being is what leads to doing, and not so much doing to being. *The bubble has it backwards, and this predisposes instructors with bubbles to reverse their process of instruction.*

And since doing is the *fruit* of having been transformed, instead of its *cause*, then trying to achieve this transformation by doing activities typical of someone who has been transformed is not only backwards, but impossible. It is like trying to build a building without any foundation at all, simply supported magically in the air. To reverse our process of instruction is to condemn this instruction to basic failure and our students to frustration, since we are asking them to do something for which they have not yet been equipped.

Impact on psychological and social maturity

Maslow's pyramid.⁴⁵ Around 1950, Abraham Maslow, a psychologist, developed a theory of personality that has made a very large impact on

and has had a broad application across many fields. His theory is used here simply to illustrate the psychological and social development of a person, and how the bubble can impact this maturity. In very brief terms, Maslow's theory suggests that the human being progresses in development from one stage to another, with these stages being defined according to the basic kind of needs that are typical to the stage, with the individual climbing a sort of ladder where the satisfaction of the needs of a certain level opens the door to the next level. Maslow organized all this into a pyramid figure, with the individual's development being seen as climbing upward in the pyramid.

In the base of the pyramid are the most basic physiological needs of a human being, such as breathing, drinking, eating, and sleeping. These needs are so fundamental that they tend to eclipse any needs at the higher levels, until the person has adequately met these more basic needs. For example, if I am desperately tired and sleepy, the basic physiological need for sleep will eclipse my need for security, friendship, etc. And until I meet this need for sleep, security and friendship (and other needs located higher in the pyramid) will be secondary. In other words, I will drive dangerously, and I will not be able to carry on a coherent conversation with my friends. Thus, unresolved needs at this level will tend to limit the advancement of an individual in this pyramid.

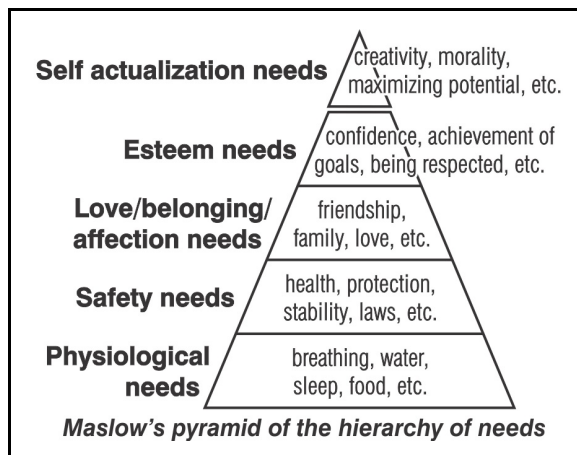
Maslow's second level (counting from below) is built around the needs of safety. Examples include needs such as safeguarding health, safeguarding physical well being, enjoying stability, having laws, having an army, etc. Upon resolving his or her most basic physiological needs, the individual now turns their attention to meeting these kinds of needs. And unmet needs at this level will tend to eclipse the needs of the higher levels, and will tend to limit the individual's progress to the next level.

The third level contains the needs of love and belonging, such as forming friendships, developing

companionship, feeling love, determining your place in your family, and determining your place in society in general. After meeting the needs of the lower level, the individual now turns his or her attention to these types of needs. And once again, unmet needs at this level tend to eclipse the needs of higher levels and tend to limit the person's progress to the next level.

The fourth level contains the needs of esteem, such as feeling confidence in oneself, feeling competent, achieving one's goals, being respected, and achieving a certain level of status. After meeting the needs of the lower levels, the individual now turns their attention to fulfilling these needs. And unmet needs at this level tend to eclipse the needs of higher levels and tend to limit the person's progress to the last level.

In the fifth level we find the needs of self actualization or self realization, such as developing one's creativity, developing a sense of morality, maximizing one's potential, and becoming all that God has intended for us to become. *It is only in this level that a person is truly free to live their life in a full and ample way, thus finding the truest meaning for their life.* A person that lives at this level is typified by a certain special form of behavior. They accept and respect themselves and others. They also recognize and accept their limitations and weaknesses, without being ashamed. They are honest, open, and genuine, without hidden lies and buried histories. They do not fear the new and the unknown. Their sense of satisfaction does not depend on others or on their sociological context (although they maintain very deep interpersonal relations). They identify deeply with others, erasing the barriers caused by their sense of "I." And they are highly ethical (they do what they do because it is correct, no matter the consequences or the opinions of others). Maslow recognized that this fifth level was significantly different in nature from the previous four levels, and thus it is slightly separated in our drawing of the pyramid.



The bubble and the pyramid. In very general terms, the bubble is fairly compatible with the first two levels of Maslow's pyramid (counting from below). The feudal reality of this bubble is able to answer without much difficulty the typical needs of these levels. But, upon crossing into level three, and later into level four, a widening gap begins to be created between the bubble's feudal reality and the typical needs of these levels. For example, the needs of forming friendships, developing companionship, determining one's place in society, feeling competent, achieving one's goals, and being respected can all be met in a certain fashion by the bubble, but it will tend to be accord-

ing to the viewpoint of democratized feudalism.

For example, the bubble will help meet the need of forming friendships, but these will tend to be feudal friendships (of lord to lord or lord to vassal). The bubble also will help provide a solution for developing companionship, but it will tend to be according to the norms of democratized feudalism, where all are sovereign in one way or another and hardly ever truly coincide in anything significant. The bubble will help its owner meet the need of determining one's place in society, but it will tend to be within a feudal society, divided into the strong and the weak, lords and vassals, benefactors and raw material. The bubble will provide options for the need of feeling competent, but it will be according to a feudal definition of competency, where what matters most is manliness and the ability to subjugate others. The bubble also will provide a solution for the need of achieving one's goals, but it will tend to be along feudal lines, where the feudal lord becomes rich by taking advantage of their vassal's contributions. And the bubble will help its owner satisfy their need to feel respected, but it will be through providing a feudal form of respect, based largely on a strong sense of sovereignty, autonomy, strength, and wealth.

The problem with all of this is that a human being is capable of meeting these needs in a much more profound and honorable fashion. For example, a human being is able to form very deep and close friendships based upon elements that are very deeply held in common (i.e., elements in which they truly coincide). But not with the bubble. A human being is capable of determining their place in society without radically dividing that society in lords and vassals, benefactors and raw

material. But not with the bubble. A human being is capable of feeling that they are competent without having to assert their authority over others and subjugate them. But not with the bubble. And a human being is able to reach their goals in an honorable and humane way, without stepping on others and taking advantage of them. But not with the bubble.

So, the bubble begins to get in the way of climbing the pyramid, and the higher one goes through levels three and four, the more of an obstacle the bubble becomes. In other words, *the bubble basically is rooted in levels one and two, and it stretches (with some difficulty) through levels three and four.*

And what happens when the bubble gets to level five, the top of the pyramid? It cannot cross this barrier. Level five, as Maslow noted, is radically different from the rest. It is the level of self realization, and by definition this requires that people be real, truthful, transparent, open, honest, frank, without hidden lies or buried histories, accepting others, accepting their own limitations and weaknesses, identifying deeply with others, living in an ethical manner (making decisions based upon what is correct according to a set of external norms, no matter the consequences and opinions of others), not depending upon others for their sense of satisfaction, etc. In short, *this fifth level is diametrically opposite of the reality presented by the bubble.* And the bubble cannot equip its owners to cross over into this fifth level. In other words, *the bubble tends to limit the healthy psychological and social development of its owner, holding them in the lower levels of Maslow's pyramid and not permitting them to reach their fullest potential.*

5.

The symptoms of democratized feudalism

One of the fastest ways to see if a person has been poisoned by a certain substance is to see if they show any of the *symptoms* that are typical of poisoning with that substance. Also, many times the degree or severity of the symptoms can serve as an indicator of how *strongly* poisoned the person may be.

The same holds true with these three poisons. They each have typical symptoms that can serve as indicators not only of having been poisoned, but also of the degree or severity of that poisoning. With this in mind, the symptoms described here generally are presented in their extreme or severe form. *This means that many times a poisoned individual will evidence symptoms that are similar to but less extreme than those described.* They can still be poisoned. And by making a comparison with this description of severe symptoms, we can use this list not only to signal the existence of a general poisoning, but also to analyze the approximate *degree* to which the patient is suffering from this poison.

What follows is a list of 56 basic symptoms of democratized feudalism. Please note that this is not an exhaustive listing of all possible symptoms, as different contexts will respond differently to this poison. However, it is believed to be a fairly extensive listing of the basic symptoms. If the reader desires further details regarding any particular symptom, please refer back to the corresponding section of the previous chapter that describes the general area of impact associated with this symptom.

General symptoms and symptoms dealing with evaluation and correction

In this area, the key signs to look for are a heavy emphasis on **sovereignty** and **autonomy**, and on the need to be **respected** as a sovereign lord.

◆ *The person behaves as a feudal lord.* This is one of the classic symptoms of democratized feudalism.

The affected person acts as if they were an absolute and sovereign feudal lord who can basically exercise all their powers without limitation (at least within their kingdom). And this individual considers it to be extremely important that others respect his or her sovereignty and autonomy. In other words, they answer to no one but themselves.

◆ *The person is independent, individualistic, and inflexible.* This is the logical conclusion of a strong application of sovereignty and autonomy. This individual does not have to answer to anyone beyond themselves, and they are free to interpret the world according to their personal viewpoint.

◆ *The person is egocentric and self-sufficient.* This is another logical conclusion of a strong application of sovereignty and autonomy. Since this individual is sovereign within their sphere, and their word is absolute law, then they are egocentric. And since they are autonomous, they must be self-sufficient because any communication of needs or the lack of anything would automatically imply that they are not adequately sufficient to be truly autonomous.

◆ *The person forms and follows their own individualistic and sovereign version of the truth.* As sovereign lord they have the right to see the world as they wish to see it, and as absolute lord, their opinions are automatically correct and worthy of following within their realm.

◆ *The person does not willingly submit to evaluation and correction.* To do so would be a clear surrender of their sovereignty and autonomy, and to require them to do so would be a violation of this same sovereignty and autonomy.

◆ *The person desires to lead, teach, and lord it over others, rather than learn, listen, and serve.* Learning and listening both imply that this individual is somehow incomplete and lacks something. This is incompatible with their autonomy and accentuates their feeling of inferiority.

◆ *The person does not truly resolve their feelings of inferiority and insecurity.* The bubble only allows this individual to *hide* these feelings, but not really resolve them.

Symptoms dealing with interpersonal relations

In this area, the key signs to look for are a heavy emphasis on **sovereignty** and **autonomy**, and a strong feeling of **insecurity**.

◆ *The person does not need nor accept the help of others.* They must be self-sufficient, therefore they have no need of others and their help.

◆ *The person seeks to obligate God and others to respect this individual's lordship.* It is very important for this individual that others (including God) respect their lordship within their bubble.

◆ *The person prefers to live isolated from the rest.* Their sovereignty and autonomy tend to keep them from truly coinciding with others, therefore they do not have the basis necessary to truly cooperate and share with others.

◆ *The person desires to lead, teach, and lord it over others, rather than learn, listen, and serve.* This trait makes it very difficult for this individual to relate with others except as lord to vassal. Interpersonal relationships are built more upon learning, listening, and serving.

◆ *The person expects that their vassals depend upon him or her, are loyal to them, and serve them.* Interpersonal relationships are built upon the two-way street of give and take. This individual's street is pretty much one-way.

◆ *The person lives as if their vassals (those who work under their supervision) existed for the personal benefit of this individual.* These vassals are viewed as raw material for the greatness of this feudal lord.

◆ *The person, as feudal lord, has the right to seize or "expropriate" the efforts and successes of their vassals.* Again, vassals are viewed as raw material, and the feudal lord has the right to mine and mill these resources and make themselves wealthy at the vassal's expense.

◆ *The person attempts to hide their sins and errors.* This individual does not tend to recognize when they have offended others and when they need to ask for forgiveness. This trait seriously obstructs interpersonal relationships.

◆ *The person, when threatened, becomes fairly intolerant.* And this intolerance obstructs the development of healthy interpersonal relations.

◆ *The person is easily offended, especially if they think that their sovereignty and autonomy are not being adequately respected.* This makes it difficult to maintain good interpersonal relations.

◆ *The person operates under a mixture of independence and dependence.* As feudal lord they are fiercely independent, with their personal liberty being equated with feudal autonomy. And as vas-

sal (and most feudal lords, in one context or another, were also vassals of a higher lord), this individual depends heavily upon his or her superiors, is strongly loyal to them, and serves them.

◆ *The person avoids interdependence, and does not think in an interdependent way.* Their world is divided into lords and vassals, and they tend not to think of others as true equals. Thus, mutual efforts are oftentimes lacking or half-hearted, and any grouping of individuals (such as committees or discussion groups) tends to quickly degenerate into a feudal tournament where the various lords joust with each other to determine their ranking and superiority.

Symptoms dealing with teamwork and unity

In this area, the key signs to look for are a heavy emphasis on **sovereignty** and **autonomy**, and on **individualism**. Of course, all of the symptoms dealing with interpersonal relations also will have some form or another of impact on teamwork and unity, but only some of the more major of these symptoms will be repeated and adapted in this list.

◆ *The person does not need nor accept the help of others.* They must be self-sufficient, therefore they have no need of belonging to the team or of cooperating with the team.

◆ *The person does not yield to form a united group.* Their sovereignty and autonomy obstruct the formation of a solid, unified, and united team.

◆ *The person prefers to work isolated from the rest.* Their sovereignty and autonomy tend to keep them from truly coinciding with the other team members. Without this element, they really do not have the basis necessary to actively cooperate and share with others in a healthy way.

◆ *The person forms and follows their own individualistic and sovereign version of the team's vision and mission statements, team plan, etc.* As sovereign lord they have the right to interpret these statements and documents as they see fit, and as absolute lord, they have the right to expect that the other team members not question this interpretation but simply respect it. This does very serious damage to teamwork and unity.

◆ *The person feels little commitment to the team, resulting in apathy and stagnation.* This includes a lack of commitment to the team members, the team vision, the team mission, the team strategy, the team ministry, etc. The end result oftentimes is a general apathy and stagnation on the part of this individual. They only want to do what they want to do.

◆ *The person, instead of feeling strongly united*

with their team members, only feels tolerant of them. Their sovereignty and autonomy will not allow them to coincide enough to form a strong unity, but this sovereignty and autonomy will allow for a certain degree of tolerance of others. But this individual will not really feel a part of this team.

◆ *The person either will try to rise quickly to the position of team leader, or they will withdraw from the team.* Their sovereignty and autonomy prevent them from truly accepting the leadership of others, unless they happen to “click” with this leader and can accept him or her as their feudal lord. Therefore, this person probably will try to become team leader fairly quickly (possibly using team meetings as feudal tournaments in which to joust with and defeat the other lords of the group). Since this individual hates to waste their time and efforts serving a “mediocre” (by feudal standards) leader, they probably won’t wait too long to make their move (once they have established a base of followers among the team members). Should they not be able to unseat the current team leader, they then will probably withdraw from the team, many times criticizing the other team members for not being able to get along with this individual, when really it was a case of this individual not ever being able to get along with the rest of the team.

◆ *The person, as a feudal lord, exercises their right to seize or “expropriate” the efforts and successes of their team members.* Team members who demonstrate less lordship in the team than this individual does (and many team members would fall in this category) are therefore candidates for being considered his or her vassals, and hence, raw material for the greatness of this feudal lord.

◆ *The person does not really plan on following a job description.* As sovereign and autonomous lords, they are free to fulfill their ministry role as they best see fit. Job descriptions, though understood in a theoretical way, have very little real impact.

◆ *The person expects a job evaluation to focus more on their dependency, loyalty, and service to their leader, rather than on their performance.* If they are a good and useful vassal, then they basically are doing a good job. And as long as they have fulfilled their ministry as they have best seen fit, then their performance basically should be acceptable.

◆ *The person does not expect continuity.* The bubble says that every new leader will tend to begin from zero with their *own* plan, so frequent and drastic breaks in continuity are only expected.

◆ *The person avoids long-range planning and formation of strategies.* If everything is going to change drastically every couple of years with a

new leader, then it is quite difficult to do any serious long-range planning. The best they can hope for is some short-range planning.

◆ *The person does not really expect ministries to be permanent or long-lasting.* Since things change drastically with every new leader, and since a sovereign individual is capable of changing their mind with regard to their individualistic version of the team’s plan and ministry, then ministries can change quite rapidly and drastically.

◆ *The person has a very pragmatic bent.* Although they will accept the authority of Scripture and its role as the source for guidance and norms, this will tend to be more at a theoretical level. In reality, they will tend to give more weight to the efficient and expedient, rather than to what is correct.

◆ *The person will work as “economically” as possible.* They will try to achieve the maximum amount of success with the minimum amount of investment. And in their attempts, they may tend to err too far on the side of economy.

Symptoms dealing with leadership

In this area, the key signs to look for are a heavy emphasis on **insecurity** and also on **sovereignty**. This sovereignty tends to be employed to boost the individual’s sense of security.

◆ *The person desires to lead, teach, and lord it over others, rather than learn, listen, and serve.* The role of leader is understood in a very feudal way, and their insecurity pushes them toward accentuating this feudal trait. But healthy, biblical leaders need to learn, listen, and serve.

◆ *The person is very insecure and does not tolerate any questioning of their authority, ability, leadership, etc.* This feudal lord has the right to lead as they best see fit, and no one has the right to question them on this or other related matters.

◆ *The person attacks, destroys, ridicules, and makes fun of other leaders so that this individual may appear to be the best leader.* Their insecurity as leader causes this individual to attack others (and sometimes viciously), in an attempt to discredit all possible competition.

◆ *The person tends to avoid unpopular decisions and situations charged with emotions, conflict, and discipline.* As an insecure leader, they fear the repercussions that might come from this sort of an encounter. Therefore, they avoid these types of events until a sufficiently large enough crisis has developed that will justify the risk that they are running.

◆ *The person tends to live from crisis to crisis.* Since a leader’s life tends to be full of conflict, emotion, and the need to make unpopular deci-

sions and to discipline those under them, then this leader tends to jump from one crisis to another to another to another.

◆ *The person creates an environment of instability so that they become indispensable.* An insecure feudal leader bolsters their security by promoting enough instability in the workplace so that the company can't possibly exist without them.

◆ *The person develops an inconsistent leadership.* Due to the instability, crises, and the general pragmatic bent and fluctuation of this leader (for example, practices that are proper one day may be punished the next), this person's leadership is very inconsistent.

◆ *The person strongly protects their territory (their ministry) and their vassals (those who work under them).* They are afraid that some other more able leader will come along and steal this raw material from them.

◆ *The person controls, dominates, and maintains their vassals in subjection.* These vassals should only be raw material for the greatness of this feudal lord, and should never be allowed to become competition.

◆ *The person expects that their vassals depend upon him or her, are loyal to them, and serve them.* These are the standard obligations of a vassal under classical feudalism. As a feudal leader, this individual expects this of all their "followers."

◆ *The person is willing to sacrifice their vassals if this will contribute to this individual's security.* As an insecure leader, this individual is capable of sacrificing their vassals if the situation calls for a scapegoat.

Symptoms dealing with teaching and discipleship

In this area, the key signs to look for are again a heavy emphasis on **insecurity** and also on **sovereignty**. As in the case of leadership, this sovereignty tends to be employed to boost the individual's sense of security.

◆ *The person sees the growth of others as a threat.* Although this teacher will theoretically agree that they would like to see their students grow, in reality, any student who tends to grow too much is viewed as a threat. The student must never eclipse their teacher.

◆ *The person can punish students who grow too*

much. Since this is seen as a threat, this teacher can punish these students to help lower the threat level (by giving them a lower grade, by humiliating them in front of the class, etc.).

◆ *The person leans more toward teaching their personal behavioral patterns and those of their bubble than biblical principles and content.* Due to their pragmatic bent (as versus an ethical bent), this teacher tends to seek to reproduce their own (and their bubble's) personal behavioral patterns in the lives of their students.

◆ *The person seeks to clone their bubble and place it over their students.* This is seen as the more efficient option for teaching. The application of Scripture to the transformation of lives is too slow.

◆ *The person emphasizes the accomplishment of activities rather than the transformation of lives.* Once again, the efficient and expedient tend to win out over the correct (but slow).

◆ *The person is content with the announcement of truths instead of their application.* Expecting any application violates the sovereignty of the student.

◆ *The person runs the risk of teaching backwards.* They run the risk of starting their teaching by requiring that the students behave in a fashion that really ought to be the end result of their teaching.

Symptoms dealing with maturity

In this area, the key signs to look for continue to be a heavy emphasis on **insecurity** and also on **sovereignty**. This sovereignty tends to be employed to boost the individual's sense of security.

◆ *The person does not admit their faults, lacks and needs, and they hide their sins and their errors.* To admit all this would be too risky.

◆ *The person does not permit evaluations and corrections that are necessary for their growth.* These are risky violations of their sovereignty.

◆ *The person does not truly resolve their feelings of inferiority and insecurity.* The bubble cannot accomplish this.

◆ *The person behaves as an immature feudal lord.* They are rooted in the lower levels of Maslow's pyramid, and their bubble will not allow them to make any significant progress toward the higher levels.

6.

The biblical ingredients of an antidote for democratized feudalism

Since democratized feudalism is a rather complex and multifaceted poison, its antidote also needs to be somewhat complex if it is to be effective. Fortunately, a significant portion of this antidote also will apply to the other two poisons, making their specific antidotes more simple.

What do we mean by “biblical ingredients”? These are the Bible verses and biblical principles that, when taught to and applied by a person suffering from this poison, will alleviate the symptoms and effects of their poisoning. Thus, it serves as an antidote. And, since the type and degree of poisoning are context specific, the antidote also can be adjusted to be context specific (by stressing those verses and principles that are most effective and applicable within the given context).

The following list of Bible verses by no means is exhaustive, and the reader is encouraged to add to it. However, it should be illustrative of the process of mixing biblical ingredients to make a final antidote. To facilitate cross-referencing these ingredients back to the appropriate impacts of the poison, the category descriptions have remained the same (for example, the antidote category “ingredients focusing on interpersonal relations” refers back to the section “impact on interpersonal relations” under the impacts of this poison).

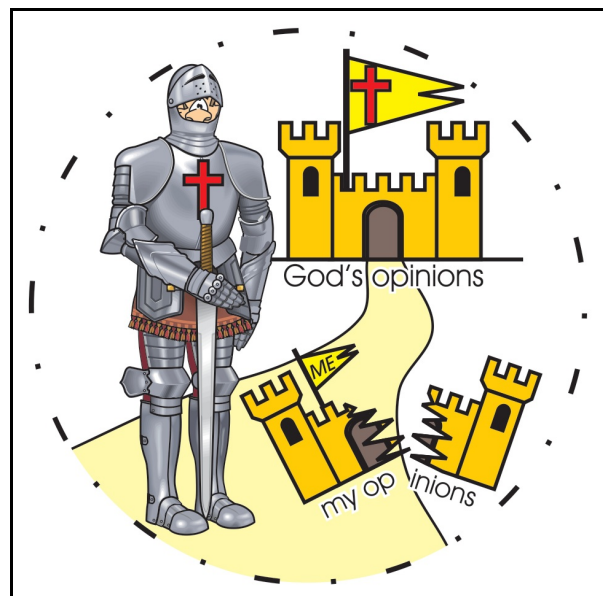
Overview

The Bible uses a special word to describe the root problem of the bubble and of democratized feudalism in general. That word is “carnality.” In essence, these traits evidence a carnal or fleshly mindset. As Christians, we should not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:5–17). But the flesh (or the old nature) is always with us, and struggles to oppose the Spirit (Gal. 5:17, 19–21), resulting at times in our obeying the flesh when we really want to obey the Spirit (Rom. 7:14–25).

How do we break free from this struggle? First of all, by accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord. We must first belong to Christ (Gal. 5:24), having been purchased by His blood (1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:18–19). Without this step, there is no basis for the following steps. Then, we must crucify the flesh (Gal. 5:24) through our death and resurrection in Christ (Col. 2:20–3:2). In the words of Colossians 3:3, “for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” This resurrection makes us a new creation, capable of living free from our old bubble (2 Cor. 5:17).

The secret is living in Christ (Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:6). In other words, we are to remove our old bubble and put on the sphere of Christ. In many ways, this new sphere is diametrically opposite of the old bubble.

- ◆ It delineates an area within which Jesus Christ is absolute Lord and Master.
- ◆ It is a protective, yet also permeable sphere, allowing for true overlap with other spheres (they



The sphere of Christ

can truly coincide and thus achieve true unity).

- ◆ It is flexible and very willing to change shape and volume when this will advance God's work.
- ◆ It is visible, and both its wearer and those around that person can easily notice this sphere.
- ◆ It is huge, and links its wearer into a vast, worldwide community of believers. There are no restrictions on expansion of this sphere.
- ◆ It is Christ-centered instead of self-centered.
- ◆ It protects its wearer, but now with the full armor of God (Eph. 6:11–17).
- ◆ It promotes that its wearer live as a humble servant, living for and serving God and others (Matt. 20:26; 23:11; Mark 10:43; John 13:1–17).
- ◆ It profoundly impacts its wearer's interpersonal relations, as this individual now seeks to live for the benefit of God and others.
- ◆ It completely resolves its wearer's issues of inferiority, insecurity, and individualism. They are no longer inferior because they are a totally forgiven, new creation (Rom. 5:1; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 2:13; 1 John 2:12). They are no longer insecure, because God has accepted them completely (Rom. 8:31–39). And they are no longer slaves to individualism, because they now live for God and others (1 Cor. 6:19–20; 12:12–27; Gal. 2:20; 5:13–14).

And this putting on the sphere of Christ is a *daily* process. Each day we must surrender to His lordship. Romans 12:1–2 has several important things to say about this sacrifice.

- ◆ There is a sense of urgency and importance. Paul says, "I urge you." This sacrifice is not presented as something that is optional or that can be postponed until a more convenient moment.
- ◆ This sacrifice involves two areas: our *mind* (the decision to present our bodies) and our *bodies* (the presentation of our bodies). Thus, it is a total sacrifice of oneself.
- ◆ This sacrifice is simply our spiritual (or reasonable) service of worship. This is not some ultra-extreme step reserved only for the super spiritual.
- ◆ This sacrifice is a *living* sacrifice. A live animal always wants to climb down off of the altar.
- ◆ This sacrifice is a *living* sacrifice. It doesn't end with just doing it one time. Instead, this is a sacrifice that must be done continually.
- ◆ This is a *holy* sacrifice. The world will have no role models to offer. Rather, any role models that the world may offer will be diametrically opposed to this sacrifice.
- ◆ This is a sacrifice that is *acceptable to God*. This means that this step will go against all the norms and expectations of our world and our society.
- ◆ This sacrifice leads to a *radical decision* to not be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. This involves at least

four important transformations in our perspective. *First*, we accept that we are responsible before God. We are not sovereign. *Second*, we accept that we are accountable before God. We are not autonomous. We have to follow His norms and rules. We have to live an ethical life, instead of just a pragmatic life. *Third*, we see our old bubble for what it really is: garbage. Paul, in Philippians 3:7–8 described his old bubble as "loss" and "rubbish." And *fourth*, we receive our security directly from God. Since the One to whom we answer has declared us to be acceptable, we no longer need the protection of the old bubble.

General ingredients

Being sovereign in our lives, living autonomously, living our own lives. Regarding these traits of this poison, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ We should be humble servants of God and of others (Dan. 9:11; Matt. 20:25–28; 23:11; Mark 10:43; Luke 22:24–27; John 13:1–17; Gal. 5:13–14).
- ◆ We have been bought and are not our own, we are servants of God and not our own lords, we have only one Lord and it is not ourselves (1 Cor. 6:19–20; Rom. 14:4, 12; Col. 3:24; 4:1).
- ◆ As Paul did, we also should consider ourselves to be slaves, belonging to another and having no autonomy of our own. Instead, we should submit our will and life to our master (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; 2:20; Titus 1:1).
- ◆ We should not have any private kingdoms (John 4:34; 5:30; 20:21; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; 2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 2:20).
- ◆ We must give up our own possessions to be disciples of Christ (Luke 14:33).
- ◆ We shouldn't destroy God's work due to our liberties, our liberty should not become a stumbling block for others (Rom. 14:20–21; 2 Cor. 6:3).
- ◆ We should live in mutual submission and interdependence (Col. 3:15–22).

Being the most important person in our world, being served by others. Regarding these traits of this poison, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ We should consider others as more important than ourselves, we should give preference to others and serve the Lord (Phil. 2:3; Rom. 12:10–11).
- ◆ We should serve, and not look to be served (Matt. 20:25–28; Mark 10:43–45; Luke 22:24–27; 2 Cor. 4:5; 11:8; Gal. 5:13).
- ◆ We should live humbly, with a correct concept of ourselves (Col. 3:12; Rom. 12:3).
- ◆ We ought not to do things to be seen of man,

but as servants of Christ we should do all in His name, for His glory (Eph. 6:6–7; Col. 3:17).

◆ As Paul did, we should consider ourselves to be a nobody, regardless of our training and accomplishments (2 Cor. 12:11).

Finding our identity, worth, and importance in ourselves and in the kingdom that we have built. Regarding these traits of this poison, the Bible has the following to say.

◆ Our identity is based on Christ, and our importance and authority are based upon that, and not upon ourselves or our accomplishments (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:5–6; 3:16–21; Col. 1:9–12).

◆ As Paul did, we should consider our previous life as garbage (Phil. 3:4–8).

◆ Whether we live or die, we do so for the Lord because we are His (Rom. 14:7–8).

Ingredients focusing on evaluation and correction

Being sovereign in our lives and living autonomously. The sovereignty and autonomy felt by a person suffering from this poison will lead them to resist evaluation and correction. They want to do their thing in their way. Regarding these traits of this poison, the Bible has the following to say.

◆ As Paul did, we also should consider ourselves to be slaves, belonging to another and having no autonomy of our own; instead, we should submit our will and life to our master, including the areas of evaluation and correction (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; 2:20; Titus 1:1).

◆ We are called to do God's will *with all our heart*, not our own will (Mark 3:35; Eph. 6:6).

Being free of any evaluation and correction by others. A person suffering from this poison desires to be free of evaluation and correction by others. Regarding these traits, the Bible has the following to say.

◆ We ought to apply Scripture to our lives with the express purpose of teaching, correction, reproof, and training (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

◆ We should live by and answer to external rules (the Bible), rather than doing whatever we want or whatever happens to work (Ps. 119:11; 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 12:9–21).

◆ We should live a moral life, by God's standards (Acts 15:28–29; Col. 3:5–7; 1 Thess. 4:3–8).

◆ We should show fruit of the Spirit, instead of doing what we want or what happens to work or seem expedient (Gal. 5:22–23).

◆ We should live for Jesus Christ, not for ourselves (Rom. 14:7–9; Gal. 2:20).

◆ We should live to serve God (2 Cor. 6:4).

◆ We should be as clay in the potter's hands (Isa. 45:9; 64:8; Jer. 18:6).

Ingredients focusing on interpersonal relations

Being self-sufficient and not needing others, living isolated from the rest. A person suffering from this poison will often exhibit these or similar traits. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

◆ Our sufficiency comes from God, therefore, we are not to be self-sufficient (1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 1:9; 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13).

◆ Our hope ought to be in the Lord, and not in ourselves, therefore, our abilities are strictly secondary (Ps. 39:7).

◆ Our hope ought to come from God, and not from ourselves, therefore, our abilities are strictly secondary (Ps. 62:5; 71:5).

◆ All members of the body of Christ are useful, and we should work in *harmony* and in *cooperation* (Rom. 12:4–8).

◆ We should live in mutual submission and interdependence (Eph. 4:1–7; 5:21; Phil. 2:1–4; Col. 3:15–22).

Forming our own personal version of the truth. A person suffering from this poison often forms their own personal version of the truth. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

◆ Truth comes only from God, not from our sovereign opinions (Rom. 3:4; John 6:67–68; 14:6; 17:17).

◆ We should speak the truth in love because we are one family, not a group of equally sovereign opinions (Eph. 4:15, 25).

◆ We should be of the same mind, sharing the same love, united in Spirit, dedicated to same purpose, and not a bunch of people each following his or her version of the truth (Phil. 2:1–4).

Defending ourselves when our lordship is threatened, and seeking to obligate others (God included) to respect our lordship. A person suffering from this poison often fiercely defends themselves and their lordship, and looks to obligate others to respect this lordship. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

◆ We should be humble servants of God and of others, not having anything personal to defend (Matt. 20:25–28; 23:11; Mark 10:43; Luke 22:24–27; John 13:1–17).

◆ We should consider others as more important than ourselves, and we should give preference to others (Phil. 2:3; Rom. 12:10).

- ◆ We should forgive one another, and be patient with one another (Col. 3:13).
- ◆ We should protect ourselves with God's armor, not some that we have designed ourselves (Eph. 6:10–17).
- ◆ We should bless those who persecute us and don't agree with us, rather than trying to get even and make them respect us, and we shouldn't repay evil for evil but let God take care of vengeance (Rom. 12:14, 17, 19).
- ◆ We should be like Paul who ministered faithfully to those who disliked him and even tried to discredit him (2 Cor. 6:4–10). Note that Paul worked together with them (2 Cor. 1:24), forgave them (2 Cor. 2:7, 10), he considered them to be his testimony, openly read by others (2 Cor. 3:2–3), he opened his heart to them (2 Cor. 6:11), he asked them to open their hearts to him (2 Cor. 6:13), but he never abused his authority over them (2 Cor. 1:24; 13:10).

Living as if the rest existed for our benefit. A person suffering from this poison oftentimes behaves as if the rest of the population exists just for his or her personal benefit. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ We should love others and give preference to them (Rom. 12:10; 13:8).
- ◆ We should be kind to others, loving them, promoting unity, and treating fairly those who work under our supervision (Col. 3:12–14; Col. 4:1).
- ◆ We should have *genuine* love, not an egotistical type of love (2 Cor. 6:6).
- ◆ We ought to function as a united body with open hearts (Rom. 12:5; 2 Cor. 6:11–13).
- ◆ We ought not to make a big distinction between people, favoring those who can most benefit us (Col. 3:11; James 2:1–9).
- ◆ We should be willing to work with people who are below us, socially, and who cannot benefit us by normal standards (Rom. 12:16).
- ◆ We should have the same humble attitude as Christ had, who left all His glory and prestige for us (Phil. 2:5–8).

Leading, teaching, and lording it over others, instead of listening to, learning from, and serving others. A person suffering from this poison tends to be filled with themselves, and wants to lead, teach, and lord it over others. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ We should be filled with the Holy Spirit and not with ourselves (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Eph. 5:18).
- ◆ We should be ready to listen, learn, adapt, and serve (Matt. 20:25–28; 1 Cor. 9:19–22; James 1:19).
- ◆ We should serve humbly and not act as lords or

seek our own glory (Matt. 6:5; 23:6–8, 10–13; Mark 10:42–44).

- ◆ We should be like Paul who did not abuse his authority and lord it over others (2 Cor. 1:24; 13:10).
- ◆ We should be like Paul who was a leader with a servant's heart (2 Cor. 7:2–3; 11:8–9).
- ◆ We really should not be eager to teach, but do so only if that is God's gifting and calling for us (James 3:1; Eph. 4:11–13).

Hiding sin and errors. A person suffering from this poison oftentimes tries to hide their sins and errors so that no one knows about them. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

- ◆ We are to confess our sins when we have committed them (1 John 1:9).
- ◆ We are to confess our sins to one another, when these sins involve others (James 5:16).
- ◆ We are to be truthful with each other (Eph. 4:14–16, 25).

Ingredients focusing on teamwork and unity

Working isolated from the rest, with our own individualistic interpretation of the team's goals and plans, without a true sense of unity and teamwork or a high degree of commitment to the team and their ministry. A person suffering from this poison tends to be isolated and insulated from the rest, lacking a deep commitment to the team and to the team's plan and goals, while preferring to follow their own individualistic interpretation of these goals and plan. Regarding this type of behavior, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ We ought to function as a united body with open hearts (Rom. 12:5; 2 Cor. 6:11–13).
- ◆ We are a body and should employ our gifts to contribute to the well-being of the body (Rom. 12:4–8, 10, 18).
- ◆ We should have the same opinion, we should coincide with the others, and we should work in unity (Rom. 15:5–6; 2 Cor. 1:24).
- ◆ We should put up with each other, forgive each other, and work in unity (Col. 3:12–14).
- ◆ We shouldn't belittle or quarrel with those that God has accepted, instead, we should work with those who are different from us (Acts 10:28; Rom. 14:1–3, 10).
- ◆ We should be humble and work in unity (Rom. 12:16).
- ◆ We should carry each other's burden and not seek to please just ourselves (Rom. 15:1).

Tending not to develop or apply job de-

scriptions, tending to base evaluations more on dependency, loyalty, and service to the leader than on performance, and tending not to develop long-range plans and strategies. A person suffering from this poison tends to avoid developing or applying job descriptions because these limit their sovereignty, individualism, and lordship. They also tend to expect that evaluations be based more on the traditional vassal traits of dependency, loyalty, and service to the leader than on performance. And they tend not to develop long-range plans and strategies, since leadership and direction tend to change so rapidly. Regarding these things, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ The Bible provides performance-oriented evaluation lists (job descriptions) for both overseer and deacon, and these are to be used to evaluate candidates (1 Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:6–16).
- ◆ We are to analyze the fruits of others, and many times this includes and analysis of their performance (Matt. 7:15–27).
- ◆ In choosing the original seven deacons, a basic list of qualities was employed, and their choice shows a developing plan, structure, and strategy in the early Church (Acts 6:1–6).
- ◆ Planning and organizing *are* important (Matt. 7:26–27; Luke 14:28–32; Acts 6:1–4).

Being more pragmatic than ethical. A person suffering from this poison tends to follow paths that seem to be opportune and expedient, offering a fast way to get to their goal (pragmatic), as versus following paths and plans laid down by others, such as Scripture or a team plan and strategy (ethical). Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ We should live by external rules, rather than doing whatever we want or whatever seems to be working (Ps. 119:11; 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 12:9–21).
- ◆ We should live a moral life, as determined by God’s standards (Acts 15:28–29; Col. 3:5–7; 1 Thess. 4:3–7).
- ◆ We should exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, instead of doing what we want or what happens to seem to work best (Gal. 5:22–23).

Being either the leader of the team or withdrawing from the team. A person suffering from this poison tends to either seek to be the team leader (aspiring to the highest position possible) or seek to withdraw from the team because this individual cannot follow the leadership of others. Regarding these things, the Bible says the following.

- ◆ We should consider others as more important than ourselves (Phil. 2:3).

- ◆ We should live as humble servants of God and humble servants of others (Matt. 20:25–28; 23:11; Mark 10:43–45; Luke 22:24–27; John 13:1–17; 2 Cor. 4:5; 11:8; Gal. 5:13).

Ingredients focusing on leadership

Providing inconsistent leadership, creating an unstable work/ministry environment, postponing making unpopular decisions, and avoiding situations that are charged with emotion, conflict, and discipline. A person suffering from this poison tends to behave in this manner. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ We are to be steadfast and immovable (1 Cor. 15:58).
- ◆ We are to persevere and be dedicated in our work (Rom. 12:11–12).
- ◆ We are to exhibit peace, patience, faithfulness, self-control, all of which are part of the fruit of the Spirit and consequences of living submitted to the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23).
- ◆ We are to be patient and able to endure hardship (Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:3; 4:5 – note that it was repeated twice to Timothy).
- ◆ We are to be like Paul who suffered many things and had much perseverance and patience (2 Cor. 6:4–10).

Resisting any questioning of our authority, ability, or leadership; attacking, destroying, ridiculing, and making fun of others so that we look better; protecting our territory and vassals; and controlling, dominating, and keeping our vassals in subjection. A person suffering from this poison tends to have a high degree of insecurity, and tends to behave in ways like these. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ The leader should behave as a servant (Matt. 20:27; 1 Cor. 9:19).
- ◆ We shouldn’t judge others, we should be tolerant of those who are different from us, we shouldn’t belittle or quarrel with those that God has accepted, and we should work with those who are different from us (Rom. 14:1–6, 10, 13; 2 Tim. 2:24–26).
- ◆ We should be gentle and patient, supporting others (Col. 3:12–13).
- ◆ We should be as clay in the potter’s hands (Isa. 45:9; 64:8; Jer. 18:6).
- ◆ We should be as Paul, who demonstrated great flexibility (1 Cor. 9:19–22).
- ◆ An overseer, among other things, ought to be secure and flexible (1 Tim. 3:2–5).

- ◆ We should seek peace and building each other up, rather than fighting with anyone if it promotes our image and goals (Rom. 12:18; 14:19; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:13).
- ◆ We are to have a thankful lifestyle (Col. 3:15; Eph. 5:20).
- ◆ We are to be as Paul was, content in all circumstances (Phil. 4:11–12).
- ◆ We shouldn't cause stumbling, even if it helps our cause and even if our liberties might permit it (Rom. 14:13, 21; 2 Cor. 6:3).
- ◆ We should put aside anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech (Col. 3:8).
- ◆ We should not harbor any private kingdoms or sacred personal goals (John 4:34; 5:30; 20:21; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; Gal. 2:20).
- ◆ We should not protect any personal territory or ministry turf (Mark 9:38–40; Luke 9:49–50).

Sacrificing vassals when necessary for security. A person suffering from this poison tends to sacrifice their vassals when this promotes their security. Regarding this, the Bible shows us that Paul could live with a great number of difficulties and threats, without having to sacrifice any “underlings,” including those that were causing his problems (2 Cor. 6:4–13).

Duplicating bubbles. A person suffering from this poison tends to clone their bubble and then seek to place these cloned bubbles on their followers or those who work under them. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ When we teach, we should not be teaching the mere precepts of men as if they were doctrine, invalidating the Word of God with our human-based instruction (Matt. 15:8–9; Mark 7:6–13; Titus 1:9; 2:1).
- ◆ We should teach the Scripture in its *entirety*, not just the parts we like the best (2 Tim. 3:16).
- ◆ We ought to live in the new man and leave the old bubble behind, along with all its teachings and “wisdom” (Rom. 8:12–17; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; Col. 3:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1).
- ◆ We are to be transformed into the image of Christ, and not the image of the leader (Rom. 8:28–29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 3:17–19; 4:13).

Ingredients focusing on teaching and discipleship

Viewing the growth of others as a threat. A person suffering from this poison tends to view the growth of others as a threat to their security as teacher. It is fine if they grow some, since this affirms this individual's abilities as teacher, but the student should never eclipse the teacher.

Regarding these things, the Bible says the following.

- ◆ Our goal should be to see the body of Christ grow in maturity and become more Christlike, working in *mutual* edification (Rom. 14:19; Eph. 4:11–16).
- ◆ We all have things to learn and we all have things to teach, so pride should not be an issue (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:11; Gal. 5:26; Phil. 2:3–4; James 4:6–7; 1 Pet. 5:5–6).
- ◆ All things should be done with edification in mind, therefore equipping and *growth* should be expected within the Church (1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19).
- ◆ We should choose leaders who can train others, so training (instruction and *growth*) is important in the Church (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:2, 24).
- ◆ We shouldn't be out to please ourselves, but rather to help the other in their *edification* (Rom. 15:1–2).

Teaching our bubble rather than biblical content. A person suffering from this poison tends to teach and reproduce their bubble (content and behavioral patterns) rather than the Bible. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

- ◆ When we teach, we should not be teaching the mere precepts of men as if they were doctrine, invalidating the Word of God with our human-based instruction (Matt. 15:8–9; Mark 7:6–13; Titus 1:9; 2:1).
- ◆ We should teach the Scripture in its *entirety*, and not just the parts we like the best or the parts that fit best with our bubble (2 Tim. 3:16).
- ◆ We ought to live in the new man and leave the old bubble behind, along with all its teachings and “wisdom” (Rom. 8:12–17; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; Col. 3:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1).
- ◆ We are to be transformed into the image of Christ, and not into the image of the class's teacher (Rom. 8:28–29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 3:17–19; 4:13).

Emphasizing accomplishing activities rather than transforming lives, and announcing truths rather than applying them.

A person suffering from this poison tends to place more emphasis on accomplishing activities than on transforming lives, and on announcing truths than on applying them. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ Intellectual assent to the truths of Scripture and outward observance of a corresponding behavior do not necessarily equate with a true application of and a radical transformation by those truths (Mark 10:17–22).
- ◆ Doing the activity does not automatically lead

to the desired transformation (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:5).

- ◆ Jesus severely criticized the Pharisees for acting the part, but without any real transformation (Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28; Mark 7:6–8).
- ◆ Real character transformation does not flow from mere outward actions, but from the heart (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28).
- ◆ Real character transformation flows from a renewed mind (Rom. 12:2).

Ingredients focusing on maturity

Living in the lower levels of Maslow’s pyramid. A person suffering from this poison tends to live in the lower levels of Maslow’s pyramid, and finds it very difficult to gain the highest levels of maturity. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

- ◆ Our goal should be to see the body of Christ *grow* in maturity and become Christlike in mutual edification, becoming *mature* and achieving the stature that corresponds to the *fullness* of Christ (Rom. 14:19; Eph. 4:12–16).
- ◆ All things should be done for edification, therefore equipping and growth *are* important (1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19).
- ◆ Teaching in the church *is* important, growth *is* important (1 Tim. 4:13–16; 2 Tim. 2:2, 24).
- ◆ Childish behavior should not be tolerated in adults, we must grow up (Luke 7:31–32; Eph. 4:14–15).

Ingredients focusing on the unresolved problems of the bubble

Inferiority. A person suffering from democratized feudalism tends to feel a strong sense of inferiority. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say regarding Christians.

- ◆ We are a new creation, therefore we are no longer inferior (2 Cor. 5:17).
- ◆ We have been declared just and holy, therefore we are not inferior (Rom. 3:24; 5:1; 1 Cor. 6:11).
- ◆ Our sins have been forgiven, therefore we are not inferior (1 John 2:12; Col. 2:13–14).
- ◆ We should live in the power of God, and not feel inferior due to our own personal level of power (Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:4–5; 2 Cor. 4:7; 6:7; Eph.

6:10; 2 Tim. 1:7).

- ◆ Our sufficiency should come from God, therefore we can believe in ourselves and in what God can do through us (2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13).
- ◆ The sufficiency of *others* also comes from God, therefore we can believe in them and in what God can do through them (2 Cor. 3:5).
- ◆ Our hope should come from perseverance and from the Scriptures, and not from ourselves and our abilities (Rom. 15:4).
- ◆ Our hope should be in the Lord, and not in ourselves and our abilities (Ps. 39:7; 62:5; 71:5).
- ◆ All members of the body of Christ have things to learn and all have things to teach, therefore no one should feel inferior (Col. 3:16).
- ◆ All members of the body of Christ are important, therefore no one should feel inferior (1 Cor. 12:12–27).

Insecurity. A person suffering from this poison tends to feel a strong sense of insecurity. Regarding this, the Bible says the following about Christians.

- ◆ He who began a good work in us will continue it to *completion*, therefore we should not feel insecure (Phil. 1:6).
- ◆ We have nothing to fear because the only One who can condemn us has already accepted us, and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:31–35).
- ◆ Christ leaves us His peace, true peace, which is not as the world gives (John 14:27; Col. 3:15).
- ◆ All members of the body of Christ are important and necessary, therefore no one should feel insecure (1 Cor. 12:12–27).

Individualism. A person suffering from democratized feudalism tends to manifest a strong individualism. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

- ◆ We have been bought with a price, therefore we belong to God, and we no longer live our life but Christ lives in us (1 Cor. 6:19–20; Gal. 2:20).
- ◆ We are to live *interdependently* (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; 12:12–27; Gal. 5:13–14; 6:2; Eph. 4:1–6, 16, 31–32; Col. 3:12–17).
- ◆ Whatever we do, we are to do it in the name of Christ, in other words, according to His will (Col. 3:17).

7.

The poison of activism

The second poison that we will study is that of activism. In chapter two we saw a basic definition of this poison, and we saw how religious and historical factors have promoted its development as well as creating a greater susceptibility to it among the Latin American population. Now we need to study this poison a bit more in depth.

Description

As we have seen, this poison basically causes the affected person to believe that the best way to transform reality is by doing activities that have been accepted as appropriate and conducive to the desired transformation. *In other words, they believe that doing leads to being.* And, following this same logic, this person also believes that the best way to *measure* the degree of transformation achieved is by examining the *quantity* of appropriate activities accomplished.

These transformations may be sought on a broad scale, such as working toward a more just society, a diminished crime rate, or an increased level of peace, security, and prosperity among the general population. Or they may be sought on a much more localized and personal level, such as working toward greater emotional maturity, greater spiritual growth, or an increased holiness. These latter examples deal with transformations in a person's very being or nature.

Regardless of the area being transformed, this person attempts to bring about the transformation through the accomplishment of certain activities that have been accepted as appropriate and conducive to the desired results. If they desire for society to have a greater number of educated young people, then they seek to achieve that by sending a greater number of children through grade school, high school, and university. And they judge the degree of success that they have had in this task by measuring the number of children that have gone through these educational activities, and the number of years of training that these children have achieved (regardless of the quality of the

education or whether or not the children have actually learned anything in the process). Or, on a more personal level, if they desire to have greater spiritual maturity in their life, then they will attend their church's discipleship program or spend a certain number of hours every day reading the Bible. And again, they will judge the degree of success that they have achieved by measuring the number of classes that they have taken, or by measuring the number of hours that they have spent (regardless of whether or not they have learned anything, or of how much they have actually applied what they have learned).

The problems with this poison

Education, discipleship, and Bible reading are very noble and worthy goals. That's not the problem. The problem is that this poison convinces the person to believe that by merely *doing* the activity they will automatically (and almost magically) *become* the desired result. Unfortunately, this is not true. For example, the perfecting of our personal character, which is a laudable goal in almost any society, really is not achieved by *doing* things. It is achieved by allowing God to work through the Holy Spirit in our lives. Activities can form a part of this total process, but *we do not depend upon the activities, but rather upon the Holy Spirit.*

Another problem caused by this poison is that it convinces the person to believe that the best way to *measure* our progress toward the desired transformation is to measure how *many* or the *degree* of activities we have fulfilled. For example, if achieving a university education is considered to be the appropriate activity conducive to becoming a mature, well-rounded individual, then progress will be measured based upon the degree of fulfillment of this activity. If you are in grade school, you've got a long way to go yet. If you're a senior in high school, you're a lot closer. And if you're a doctoral student, then you've made it.

Something similar easily can happen in the discipleship programs of our churches. If fulfilling

this discipleship program is considered to be the appropriate activity conducive to spiritual maturity, then progress will tend to be measured based upon your location in the program. If you are just beginning, then you have very little spiritual maturity. But if you're at the end, then you must be spiritually mature. And it doesn't really matter so much whether or not you've been through other discipleship programs in other churches, because our church's accepted appropriate activity is going through *our* program. Hence, it can be difficult to transfer "academic credit" between churches.

This system of measuring progress based upon the volume of activity is seriously flawed. A person can complete an entire discipleship program and not grow one bit in their spiritual maturity, just like a person can complete all their university studies without having learned hardly a thing. This was a key fact that the Pharisees in Jesus' time were unable to understand (Matt. 23:5-7, 14, 23, 25-27; Mark 7:6-8; Luke 11:39-42; 20:46-47). They thought that by *doing* their ritual activities, they would *be* acceptable to God. But God looks on the heart, and sees if the actions flow from there. As Isaiah 29:13 says, "then the Lord said, ... 'this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote.'"

Another problem caused by this poison is burnout and stagnation. Burnout comes about because this poison tends to feed upon itself in an upwardly spiraling cycle. For example, to keep growing in spirituality, you must keep *adding* more and more activities, since growth is associated with increased quantity. And any decrease in activities is seen as a decrease in spirituality. This "Martha complex" can actually short-circuit maturity and growth by crowding out true learning. And stagnation comes about as people's physical limitations force them to withdraw from this spiraling cycle for a while and go into a "holding pattern" that kind of "freezes" their growth.

The role of decrees and declarations

There is another trait of this poison that needs to be highlighted here. Since it convinces the affected person that the best way to gauge progress toward a transformation is by measuring the amount of activity accomplished, then this poison also predisposes this person to *decree* or *declare* the transformation as officially achieved, as soon as the individual has completed a satisfactory amount of activities. Thus, titles, diplomas, and certificates are so important within the Latin

American context. They decree us to be competent, based upon the quantity of activity done (and many times without any significant analysis of our true abilities), and they declare us to be knowledgeable, again based upon the amount of activities done (and many times without any significant analysis of what we have actually learned).

As was seen above, the system of measuring progress based upon volume of activity is seriously flawed. Then the same will be true of the system that decrees or declares a transformation as having been officially achieved, *but solely on the basis of this supposed progress*. But that doesn't stop people who are intoxicated with this poison. They give diplomas to people who have never learned anything in their schooling, but who have fulfilled the minimum quantity of academic rituals. And they decree as mature, people who still manifest a marked spiritual *immaturity* in their daily lives, but who have fulfilled the minimum quantity of appropriate rituals in their church's discipleship program. And we wonder why our churches are hindered by lack of maturity and spiritual growth?

The effect of decrees and declarations made before the transformation

One more thing needs to be pointed out about this poison. With a strong undercurrent of activism, and with a strong faith *in* activism, then this poison can even bring a person to the point of decreeing or declaring changes as having been accomplished simply by voting them into being or by requiring them by law. In other words, *requiring* that everyone go through a certain program or behave a certain way is essentially tantamount to *achieving* the desired transformation, since we have *assured* (by requirement) that the proper activities will be *done*, thus guaranteeing that the desired transformation will be *achieved* (at least according to the logic of this poison). Essentially, this is taking the role of decrees and declarations that we just saw, and shifting it into the future. Rather than decreeing changes based upon activities already accomplished, now we are decreeing changes based upon activities we *will* accomplish.

And how does this play out in real life? For an example of this, we turn once again to Octavio Paz, Mexican philosopher and analyst of the Mexican psyche. When the new nations sprung up across Latin America in the early 1800's, many of them had democratic laws and some form of a democratic Constitution. Speaking specifically of Mexico, but also applicable to Latin America in general, Paz states that "almost everyone thought ... that decreeing new laws would be enough to

transform reality... Everyone expected that a democratic Constitution ... would almost automatically produce a new social class.”⁴⁶ In other words, by *legislating* (requiring) democratic laws and a democratic Constitution, they were able to *declare* themselves to be democratic, and then they thought that this would almost automatically make them *be* democratic. Unfortunately, as Paz continues on to point out, reality didn’t always turn out that way.⁴⁷

The same thing can happen in a church. For example, if a church officially mandates (say, in an annual business meeting) that from this point on it will live in holiness, then based upon that *mandate* (requirement), this church can now *declare* that it lives in holiness. In other words, since they have *assured* that the proper activities will be done, then they have *guaranteed* that the desired transformation will be achieved (according to this poison’s logic where *doing* leads to *being*). And the congregation can now feel that this declaration somehow automatically *makes* them holy. And all of this can happen almost *independently* of whether or not this congregation really lives in holiness.

***Additional observation
regarding feeling emotions***

Everything that has been said so far about

doing activities can also, *in a way*, be applied to feeling emotions. In this case, feeling the emotions basically becomes a substitute for doing the activity. This gives a person suffering from this poison two different levels at which they may “achieve” a transformation. In other words, as we have already seen, they may “achieve” a transformation by *doing* the appropriate activities. For example, they may “achieve” unity by doing activities in geographical proximity (an activity that is appropriate to people who are united in a healthy group). But they may also “achieve” this same transformation by *feeling* the appropriate emotion. For example, they may “achieve” unity by feeling a *closeness* or some *emotional tie* with their group (an emotion that is appropriate to people who are united in a healthy group). Either way, whether based upon this activity that has been done or based upon this emotion that has been felt, this individual can now declare that unity has been achieved.

However, in both cases (activity and emotion), doing or feeling the appropriate response does not automatically equate with the desired transformation, nor does it automatically lead to this transformation. Once again, actions and emotions are more the *fruit* of what we are than the cause. They *proceed* from what we are in our heart.

8.

The impact of activism

In the previous chapter describing this poison, we have introduced some of the ways that it can negatively impact an individual, a church, a society, or a whole country. Now the time has come to look a bit closer at the overall negative impact that this poison can have. Here our analysis will follow a similar outline to the analysis of democratized feudalism, making it easier to cross-reference between the two.

General impact

A tendency to think that by *doing* the appropriate activities or by *feeling* the appropriate emotions, they can transform what they *are* (their nature or being). A person suffering from this poison believes that by doing things or feeling things they can change what they *are*. In other words, they believe that doing can lead to being, and they believe that feeling can lead to being. So, in order to be united, they will attempt to act united, and in order to be united, they will attempt to feel united. And conversely, if they act united, then they must be united, and if they feel united, then they must be united.

[NOTE: although it is possible to place the word “feeling” in practically every place that the word “doing” appears in this section, and “emotion” in practically every place where “activity” is found, this will result in a very wordy document that will be difficult to read. Therefore, from this point on, only “doing” and “activity” usually will be used. The reader should understand and remember, however, that “feeling” and “emotion” are also implied in the content of the text.]

A tendency to trust in their actions and abilities to change themselves. Of all the negative impacts that this poison can have, this is probably the most dangerous because it predisposes the affected person to follow the *wrong* path toward their transformation. Instead of coming to God and asking that *He* transform them or their

reality, they trust more in being able to change it through *their* efforts and *their* activities (and *their* emotions). It’s a little like hanging apples on a pine tree and then thinking that you’ve somehow magically transformed it into an apple tree. Only *God* can truly change the nature of something.

Of course, these individuals will often agree, at the *theoretical* level, that only God can change reality, and that they are really trusting in Him for this change. But the question is: in what are they *really* (at the real level) trusting? Does a close examination of their day to day practices and activities really show that they are trusting in God? Or does it show a greater emphasis and faith in their actions and abilities? A person suffering from this poison will tend to trust in their actions and abilities.

A tendency to trust human programs and activities. Just as the focus of trust tends to be shifted off of God and onto the individual, there is also a corresponding tendency to shift the focus of trust from divine programs and activities onto human programs and activities. For example, there is a tendency to trust the transformation of society more to the application of human programs and activities (such as education and sports) than to evangelization and the transformation that the Holy Spirit can bring to a saved life. Another example, on a more personal level, is the transformation of a person’s character and spiritual maturity. People influenced by this poison tend to trust more in their fulfillment of human programs than in God and His activity through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they place more faith in the completion of assignments made in a discipleship class than in their personal study and application of the Word of God, under the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit. *Doing* leads to *being*, and *doing* is more important than *being* (at least according to the logic of this poison). Once again, this person will likely say, at the theoretical level, that they are really trusting in God. But what does the *reality* of their daily activity show?

A tendency to assign more importance to doing than to being. As has been seen above, this poison basically convinces a person to believe that being flows from doing. If they want to be happy, rich, wise, etc., then they need to *do* the appropriate activities that this type of a person does, and these will then lead to the desired goal. So they throw a party to *be* happy. They spend money to *be* rich. They go to a school to *be* wise. In other words, under the influence of this poison, a person ends up assigning greater importance to doing than to being, because doing is the road that leads to what they want to be.

A tendency to focus on doing instead of being. Since a person under the influence of this poison tends to think that doing is more important than being, then it is logical for this person also to tend to focus on doing instead of being. Thus, many Latin American churches can run the risk of placing greater emphasis on doing the appropriate activities of the church than on being the type of person that God wants them to be. Of course, these churches most likely will agree *theoretically* that being is more important than doing, but what is actually carried out in practice may be quite different.

Furthermore, the pragmatic bent that was seen in the poison of democratized feudalism also will help emphasize doing instead of being. Doing is relatively fast and easy, while transforming one's being is a much slower and more difficult process. Thus, doing presents the quick route to success. Also, doing is relatively economical, while transforming one's being is a much more costly process. Thus, doing also presents the more efficient route to success.

A tendency to confuse having success in one's activities with experiencing God's blessing upon one's life. Due to the strong focus upon doing and upon activities, a person affected by this poison tends to equate having *success* in their activities with experiencing God's blessing upon their life. In other words, if their activities are going well, then God "obviously" is blessing them, their life, their plans, their goals, etc. Conversely, if activities happen not to be going well, then this person tends to view that as a sign of God's disapproval.

A tendency to be so involved in activities that they run a significant risk of burnout, stagnation, and frustration. With this poison's strong focus on doing activities, an affected person runs a significant risk of burnout, stagnation, and frustration. Why? In order to be growing, they

need to be doing an *increasing* number of activities (more activities mean more growth), and any cutback tends to be equated with a decrease in growth or spirituality. Therefore, they experience a strong tendency to add more and more activities to their list. Burnout results when they can no longer cope with the number of activities required of them. Stagnation occurs when they become so busy *doing* things that they have no time to *become* the desired finished product. The wheels are spinning at top speed, but the person isn't going anywhere. And frustration occurs when the individual finds larger and larger chunks of their time and energy being spent on activities that are clearly secondary or tertiary.

Impact on teamwork and unity

A tendency to confuse doing activities in proximity with being a team. A person affected by this poison tends to equate doing activities in spacial and temporal proximity with actually being a *team*. Therefore, the main ingredient that is required to make a team is just to work close to each other. This means that the underlying factors of common vision, common mission, common goal, etc. are all eclipsed by *doing* things close to each other.

A tendency to confuse activity (or an emotion felt) with productivity. If doing leads to being, then doing must basically equate with productivity. Therefore, if this person is *doing* something, then they are being a productive unit of this team. And, as will be seen later under "impact on planning and organization," *what* they are doing does not really matter as much as *that* they are doing.

A tendency to think from a more pragmatic than ethical viewpoint. For a person affected by this poison, obtaining success in their activities tends to be more important than following external rules and norms (such as the Bible, a team plan, a team strategy, etc.). Furthermore, since success corresponds with God's blessing (as has been seen), then He must be happy with whatever they are doing, as long as it is successful. Therefore, a team member suffering from this poison does not really have to follow the team's plan or strategy, as long as he or she thinks that they can achieve success more easily by following another path.

A tendency to understand "imitate" as reproducing activities. A person under the

influence of this poison will tend to limit their definition of “imitate” to “reproducing another’s activities,” rather than expanding it to include reproducing the transformation of lifestyle and worldview that underlies these activities. If this transformation has not already occurred in this individual’s life, then these duplicated activities very well may lack the underlying foundation that supports them and makes them effective.

Impact on leadership

A tendency to confuse doing activities with being a good leader. A leader affected by this poison will tend to equate doing activities with being a good leader. Therefore, if he or she is busy doing something highly visible, then they are a good leader. Conversely, if they are not visibly busy (such as when they are working on strategies, philosophies of ministry, and other similar “invisible” activities), then they consider that their leadership is suffering.

A tendency to confuse doing activities with transforming lives. Since, for a leader under the influence of this poison, doing tends to lead to being, then doing the appropriate activities tends to equate with transforming lives. Therefore, if they are busy, they are changing lives.

A tendency to declare changes based simply on a list of completed activities. A leader affected by this poison tends to declare that changes have been achieved based simply on a list of completed activities (or on emotions felt), rather than on hard evidence of transformed lifestyles. Thus, certificates and diplomas are handed out, declaring spirituality, maturity, holiness, based solely upon the recipient’s completion of a list of approved activities (regardless of what they have actually applied to their lives).

A tendency to think from a more pragmatic than ethical viewpoint. A leader that is suffering from this poison tends to lead and make decisions based more upon what they see as the most opportune and efficient choices at the moment, rather than what is correct by an external set of standards (such as the Bible, the team’s plan, the church’s plan, etc.).

A tendency to lack stability and focus. Since this leader tends to lead and make decisions based upon what he or she views as the most opportune or efficient choices at the moment, then their leadership tends to lack stability and focus. They follow one path for a while, then abruptly

switch to another because it offers greater success or speed. This leader needs the stabilizing influence of external rules and norms in order to achieve the focus and perseverance necessary for good leadership.

Impact on planning and organization

A tendency to confuse activity (or an emotion felt) with productivity. A person under the influence of this poison tends to equate doing with productivity. Therefore, if this person is *doing* something in the area of planning and organization, then they are being productive in this area. But, as was seen with the case of the leader, if these activities happen to be more “invisible,” then this productivity may be called into question.

A tendency to act as if it doesn’t really matter so much what is done, just that something is done (preferably something visible). This is the logical conclusion of the previous point. If activity equals productivity, and productivity is what is sought, then any visible activity really will fit the bill. Thus, in planning and organization, activities tend to be all lumped together regarding their usefulness or role.

A tendency to make other activities more important than planning and organizing. This is the logical conclusion of the previous point plus a pragmatic point of view. In other words, since all activities tend to be lumped together regarding their usefulness, and since planning and organizing tend to be more “invisible” and *much* slower activities, then they tend to take the backseat to practically any other activity. Hence, planning and organizing are so seldom accomplished.

A tendency to try to reproduce activities without previously having reproduced the reality that underlies these activities and gives them meaning. Since “imitate” means to reproduce activities, and since doing activities equates with productivity, then a strategist suffering from the effects of this poison tends to zero in on just replicating (mechanically copying) the activity, regardless of whether or not they have first achieved the necessary reality (i.e., transformed lifestyles) that underlies these activities and gives them meaning and context. Thus, one can find many programs functioning across Latin America where behavioral patterns (activities) are being duplicated, but *without* the corresponding underlying reality that gives these activities mean-

ing, weaves them into a much larger behavioral whole, and makes them function correctly. It is kind of like building a tall building by going through the motions of placing one brick upon another, but without first establishing a firm foundation or a clear understanding of how these bricks all fit together to make a building. A building may be built this way, but it will crumble and fall apart.

A tendency to lack an adequate base to be able to implement a program with success. A strategist suffering from this poison tends to try to implement programs by sheer imitation of activities, rather than by first establishing the firm foundation upon which these activities were originally built. This oftentimes leads to “hollow” programs, hanging in the air with no real support in under them. And these programs oftentimes fail, not because the program was defective, but because its implementation was too shallow.

A tendency to think more from a pragmatic point of view than from an ethical one. Following the tendencies of this poison, this strategist tends to make his or her decisions based upon what seems to be opportune and efficient at the moment. External rules and norms (such as the Bible, the team’s plan, the church’s plan, etc.) tend to take a backseat in planning and organizing.

A tendency to lack stability and focus. As a consequence of their pragmatic point of view, this strategist tends to lack stability and focus. He or she first follows one path, then another, and then a third, based largely upon which offers the greatest degree of success in the least amount of time. The stability and focus that are offered by external rules and norms many times are relegated to the backseat along with those same rules and norms.

Impact on teaching and discipleship

A tendency to confuse doing activities with being a good teacher or student. As was seen in the case of a leader, the teacher or student affected by this poison will tend to equate doing activities with being a good teacher or student. Therefore, if he or she is busy doing something visible, then they are doing a good job. However, if they are not so visibly busy (as oftentimes happens when a person concentrates on transforming their nature and developing more Christlikeness in their life), then they run the risk of thinking that

their teaching or studying is suffering.

A tendency to confuse activity (or emotions felt) with understanding and applying the truth taught. The student or teacher suffering from this poison tends to equate activity (or emotion) with understanding and applying the truth being taught (i.e., transformation of being). Therefore, if they are busy or if they feel the right thing, then they have been productive and have “understood” and “applied” the corresponding truth. This can lead to shallow learning.

A tendency to focus more on the accomplishment of activities than on the transformation of lives. The teacher or student suffering from this poison will tend to focus more on accomplishing activities than on transforming lives. In part, this is due to the poison’s effect that says that *doing* is the way to *become*. Therefore, they seek to achieve the desired transformation of lives by doing certain activities, and their focus naturally centers on doing those activities. This is also due to the tendency toward pragmatism. They seek the opportune and efficient, a fast track to their goal, and doing activities is always an easier, faster, and more economical task to fulfill than achieving the transformation of lives, which tends to be quite slow and costly.

A tendency to focus on announcing truths rather than on applying them. The teacher and student under the effect of this poison will tend to focus more on the *announcement* of truths than on their *application*. Again, this is due in part to the pragmatic bent of the individual. Announcement is much easier, faster, and more economical than application. It is also due to the poison’s emphasis on doing leading to being. If this is true, then the mere announcement of the truths will almost automatically and magically lead to their application. And this trait also is due to the impact of sovereignty from democratized feudalism. To expect application would be to violate the personal sovereignty of the individual. Therefore, all that is left is announcement of truths.

A tendency to think that they have already changed their nature because of their behavior. A student or teacher suffering from this poison runs the risk of thinking that because behavior has been modified (*activities* have been accomplished), then the individual’s nature must also have been changed. For example, they may think that because the individual now sits at a table with others, then they now are a full part of the team. Or they may think that because the

individual has cleaned the church's bathroom facilities for the past month and a half that they have become humble. Unfortunately, a person can do many activities and never be changed by any of them. But, this tendency *can* result in "vaccinating" the person against any true changes in their nature because they think that the changes have already been made.

A tendency to declare growth and maturity based simply upon a list of completed activities. This is the organizational application of the previous tendency. Since the organization believes that this person has already changed their nature because they have accomplished the appropriate list of activities (or felt the appropriate emotions), then this organization now officially certifies this transformation through a diploma, certificate, or other form of official recognition. This adds a second, and much stronger, "vaccination" against any true changes in the individual's nature. They do not need to do anything more, because they have their certificate "proving" their maturity. This can result in the local church having to put up with immature Christians who have performed the appropriate activities without any real transformation in their nature, but now have been officially declared to be "mature" by this same church. To do otherwise would be to rescind this church's official declaration, which is very embarrassing and hard to do in a bubble environment (and also dangerous).

A tendency to teach and learn backwards. The teacher or student suffering from this poison tends to try to teach and learn backwards. In other words, based upon the previous tendencies, they *begin* the learning experience by assigning activities that really ought to be the *final fruit* of this instruction. For example, they attempt to teach or learn humility by cleaning bathrooms. Or they attempt to teach or learn unity and cooperation by having people do activities together. The problem is that elements like humility, unity, and cooperation are not things that really can be taught or learned. Rather, they are the *fruit* of a lifestyle that has been transformed by *other* more basic truths. Teaching, learning and applying these other truths is what will lead to this transformed lifestyle, which then will result in greater humility, unity, and cooperation, which will lead the person to truly do activities together and to do humble things like cleaning the church's bathrooms. But, because the teacher and the students are predisposed to focus on the *final* activities as the starting point and mechanism to change their nature, then the basic truths that can *really* trans-

form their nature tend to be overlooked and never taught and applied. The end result is a hollow discipleship, evidencing proper behavior, but many times without the corresponding transformation of nature that should underlie this behavior.

Impact on maturity

A tendency to confuse doing activities and feeling emotions with true growth and maturity. If *doing* the appropriate activities or *feeling* the appropriate emotions is the way to *change* what a person really is, then accomplishing these activities and feeling these emotions must equate with growth and maturity. Thus, a person suffering from this poison can easily confuse mere activity with genuine growth and maturity. Stated in another way, if I do the things that a surgeon normally does (dress in a certain uniform, carry the appropriate medical tools, use the correct medical terminology when I speak, have an office in a medical building, etc.), then I ought to be a surgeon. And it doesn't really matter so much if I have *learned* anything about surgery or medicine, as long as I can *act* like a surgeon.

Many a church has people in it that think that if they do the activities that a mature Christian typically does (carry a Bible, attend church, tithe, quote a Bible verse from time to time, read their Bible a bit each day, etc.), then they must be a mature Christian. And it doesn't matter so much if they have *applied* the truths that they find in their Bible, as long as they can *act* like a mature Christian.

A tendency to feign a genuine change, when it is just mere activity. Since this poison causes people to confuse doing with being, then it makes it really tempting for a person to *appear* to be genuinely transformed by simply *performing* the appropriate activities (or by having the appropriate diploma or certificate). For example, if they want to be seen as a mature Christian that is qualified to teach others Bible doctrine, all they need to do is act like that kind of a person, and the church will almost automatically believe that they are. And it is even more convincing if they happen to have a diploma or certificate that declares them to be that kind of a person. Presented with this "evidence," very few in the church will even think to examine whether or not this individual actually has learned anything, or whether or not he or she actually lives like a mature believer. It is enough to just act the part.

A tendency to be so involved in activities that they jeopardize the very transforma-

tion that they seek. Due to the emphasis that this poison places on doing activities in order to become the desired finished product, the affected person may very well become so involved in learning activities that they do not have the time to sit down and let what they are learning seep into their nature and begin to transform it. In other words, they are so busy “*learning*” that they have no time to *comprehend* (understand and apply) what they are learning. This is the “Martha complex” at work (Luke 10:38–42). But, since this individual is blinded by this poison, they do not notice that their *doing* is actually preventing them from *being*.

This results in a form of intellectual stagnation where the wheels are spinning at top speed, but the person isn’t getting anywhere. And, as has been seen, this same trait also can result in *ministry* stagnation, because the person is so involved in accomplishing the individual components of the ministry that they have no time to step back and weave the individual parts into a whole, united ministry.

A tendency to declare growth and maturity based simply upon a list of completed activities or upon an emotion felt. This tendency also was seen in the previous section that covered this poison’s impact on teaching and discipleship. Since this poison predisposes people to believe that they already have changed their nature because they have accomplished the appropriate list of activities (or felt the appropriate emotions), then it also predisposes them to *declare* growth and maturity just because someone accomplished a list of activities or felt a certain emotion. And once declared mature, they are mature, according to this poison. This can result in the local church having to put up with immature Christians who have performed the appropriate activities without any real transformation in their nature, but now have been officially declared to be “mature” by this same church.

A tendency to declare growth and maturity based simply upon a list of activities that will be required. This tendency takes the previous one and shifts it into the future. In other words, in the previous tendency, having fulfilled a list of activities was sufficient to decree that a person was mature. Now, shifting it into the future, *requiring* that this person fulfill a certain set of activities is sufficient for declaring them mature (by faith), even before they have actually done these activities, because it has been *assured* that they *will* do them.

Therefore, a church can *declare* that its con-

gregation is living in holiness because they all signed a *pledge* to live in holiness. And since this pledge assures that they will fulfill the appropriate activities, then the declaration can be made as if the activities were already fulfilled. Or they can declare that their congregation is following the church’s vision or mission statements, because they officially voted to follow them. By obligating themselves to fulfill the appropriate activities, the declaration can be made. The same thing can happen with signing a commitment to work on a team. Since the person has signed a pledge to fulfill the appropriate activities of a team member, then they can be declared to be a team member (whether or not they even understand the meaning of the term “team member”). Of course, the problem here is that promises and obligations many times do not end up changing reality.

A tendency to separate the theoretical world from the real world. A person suffering from this poison tends to separate the theoretical world from the real world, believing that if the proper theoretical activities are done, then the real world behavior will somehow come into alignment and turn out to be fine. This is an extrapolation of the previous tendency. In other words, if *theoretical* promises and obligations (such as pledges or an official congregational vote) are sufficient base to declare as accomplished corresponding changes in *reality*, then it is enough to achieve the theoretical level because reality will automatically and magically change as well. Thus, a person affected by this poison will tend to focus on the theoretical level more than on the real level (since the real level will “follow suit”). Therefore, theoretical activities such as *signing* creeds, doctrinal statements, or memorandums of understanding are much more important than whether or not the document being signed accurately reflects this person’s *real* position at this point and place in time. The person tends to believe that reality will come into alignment with theory.

And to a degree, the same can be said of emotions, substituting the emotional world for the theoretical one in this point. Under the influence of this poison, a person tends to focus more on the emotional level than on the real level, because they believe that reality will somehow come into alignment with their emotions. Therefore, feeling the correct *emotions* is much more important than whether or not these emotions accurately reflect this person’s *real* position at this point and place in time.

A tendency to blame themselves, feel regret, and do all sorts of penance due to their

lack of commitment to maturity. A person affected by this poison tends to blame themselves, feel regret, and do all types of penance for their lack of commitment to maturity, but usually only at the theoretical or emotional level. And they tend to feel that these theoretical and emotional activities will somehow be sufficient to change their reality. Unfortunately, many times it doesn't work out that way. Take for example the case of one student who stood up before their class, placed their hand upon their heart, and vowed before God to be more faithful in their attendance ... and then never came again.

A tendency to practice a ritual and repetitive religion, rather than a dynamic and transforming religion. A person suffering from this poison tends to practice a religion that is filled with hollow, ritual, and repetitive activities that many times have relatively small impact on their reality. This is vastly different from the person who practices a dynamic and transforming religion, where their activities naturally and genuinely flow from a character, nature, and lifestyle that have been radically transformed by the Holy Spirit through the study and application of God's Word.

9.

The symptoms of activism

What are some of the principal symptoms that a person might be suffering from poisoning by activism? The following is a list of 30 symptoms, divided according to the same categories as were seen in the previous chapter. Please note that this is not an exhaustive listing of all possible symptoms, as different contexts will respond differently to this poison. However, it is believed to be a fairly extensive listing of the basic symptoms. If the reader desires further details regarding any particular symptom, please refer back to the corresponding section of the previous chapter.

Once again, in order to help identify the degree of poisoning, these symptoms generally are presented in their extreme or severe form. *This means that many times a poisoned individual will evidence symptoms that are similar to but less extreme than those described.* They can still be poisoned. And by making a comparison with this description of severe symptoms, we can analyze the approximate *degree* to which the patient is suffering from this poison.

General symptoms

In this area, the key signs to look for are a heavy emphasis on **activity** and **sovereignty**.

◆ *The person confuses activity with productivity.* This is one of the classic symptoms of activism, believing that activity and productivity are synonymous. As long as they are *doing*, they are being productive (no matter what gets accomplished).

◆ *The person focuses on doing instead of being.* This is another classic symptom of activism. They believe that by *doing* they can *become* the final product that they seek.

◆ *The person confuses experiencing success in their activities with receiving God's blessing.* If things are going well with what they are doing, then God is blessing. And if things are not going well, then God is not blessing, and is somehow displeased.

◆ *The person experiences burnout, stagnation, and frustration.* This is due to being overburdened

with activities, many of which are only of secondary or tertiary importance.

Symptoms dealing with teamwork and unity

The key signs to look for in this area are a heavy emphasis on **activity** and **success**.

◆ *The person confuses doing activities in geographical proximity with working as a team.* They think that being a team basically means doing things together, and they tend to overlook the more underlying elements that unite and make a team (such as coinciding on the team's vision and mission).

◆ *The person has a more pragmatic viewpoint than ethical.* They are guided more by achieving success and following the opportune and efficient than by following the rules and norms established by the team.

Symptoms dealing with leadership

In this area, the key signs to look for are a heavy emphasis on **activity**, **success**, and **making declarations**.

◆ *The person confuses doing activities with being a good leader.* They tend to equate being busy with being a good leader. Conversely, they tend to equate not being visibly busy (such as when developing philosophies, strategies, plans, etc.) with being a poor leader.

◆ *The person confuses doing activities with transforming lives.* They think that if they and those that work under them are busy, then their natures and lifestyles are being transformed into what God wants them to be.

◆ *The person officially declares that the desired transformations have been achieved, based upon a list of accomplished activities.* They base their declaration upon the fact that they or those who work under them have completed a certain list of activities, and they believe that these activities

have caused a corresponding change in lifestyle.

◆ *The person is a more pragmatic leader than ethical.* They choose the opportune and efficient, instead of the correct (as determined by external rules and norms).

◆ *The person is an unstable leader and lacks focus.* He or she follows different paths, switching depending on which happens to offer the fastest track to success, instead of following external rules and norms that provide stability and focus.

Symptoms dealing with planning and organization

The key signs to look for in this area are a heavy emphasis on **activity**, **success**, and **ritualism**.

◆ *The person confuses doing activities in planning and organization with being productive in these areas.* They tend to equate being busy with making good plans and forming good organizational policies. Conversely, they tend also to equate lack of visible activity (such as when making strategies, establishing philosophies, etc.) with accomplishing little in planning and organization.

◆ *The person decides which activity to do based upon seemingly confusing criteria.* Since activity is productivity, then it doesn't really matter so much what they do, just that they do something. Therefore, they may skip a key strategy or planning session to have some ice cream with friends. Both are productive activities, if activity is productivity. And many times the last activity proposed before the allotted time slot is the one that wins out, since it is the most recent request. Thus, those who announce meetings well in advance may end up being penalized.

◆ *The person tends to be more pragmatic than ethical.* Achieving success and following opportune and efficient paths are more important for this person than following the norms and opinions of others (such as their team, their team's plan, their church, the Bible, etc.).

◆ *The person lacks stability and focus.* When they are developing plans and organization, they will tend toward the opportune and efficient, rather than fitting into external norms and regulations (such as an overarching team plan). Consequently, they may change direction abruptly if they think that a new track offers a better chance of success.

◆ *The person emphasizes doing activities instead of planning and organizing.* Planning and organizing, by their very nature, tend to be long, drawn out activities with little or nothing concrete to show for them. This person tends to see this as a waste of time, since they could be spending this time doing something "truly productive."

◆ *The person defines "imitate" as reproducing activities.* They focus on duplicating the activities of the one that they are imitating, rather than trying to duplicate that individual's transformed lifestyle that underlies and gives meaning to these activities.

◆ *The person tends to lack an adequate base for implementing a program with success.* Since they define "imitate" as reproducing activities, then they attempt to implement a new program by duplicating the activities that the original designer did, without taking sufficiently into account that these activities and this whole program were built upon a certain lifestyle, philosophy of ministry, worldview, etc., and that without these undergirding elements, the program doesn't really have much chance of success.

Symptoms dealing with teaching and discipleship

In this area, the key signs to look for are a heavy emphasis on **activity** and **making declarations**.

◆ *The person confuses doing activities and feeling emotions with comprehending and applying the truths taught.* They tend to equate being busy studying or feeling the thrill and enthusiasm of learning new Bible truths with actually comprehending and applying these truths. Studying and excitement *are* part of the whole process, but they do not equal true comprehension and application.

◆ *The person confuses doing activities and feeling emotions with a genuine transformation of their nature and being.* They tend to equate being busy studying or feeling the thrill and enthusiasm of learning biblical truths with actually being transformed by these truths. Studying and excitement *are* part of the whole process, but they are only the beginning of the much larger process that leads to transformation.

◆ *The person focuses more on the accomplishment of activities than on the transformation of lives.* Since they have confused doing activities with a genuine transformation of life, then they believe that doing one is accomplishing the other. And, given their pragmatic bent, this person will opt for the expedient, which is the accomplishment of activities (this is much easier and faster than transforming lives).

◆ *The person focuses more on the announcement of truths than on their application.* Since the announcement of truths is an activity that they confuse with a genuine transformation of life, then they believe that doing one is accomplishing the other. And again, given their pragmatic bent, this person will opt for the expedient, which is the

announcement of truths (this is much easier and faster than applying the truths).

◆ *The person officially declares, with certificates and diplomas, that the desired transformations have been achieved, based upon a list of accomplished activities.* They base their declaration upon the fact that their students have completed a certain list of activities, believing that these activities have caused a corresponding change in their student's lives, rather than basing their declaration upon concrete *evidence* of changes in their student's lives.

◆ *The person tends to accept an immature Christian character, as long as the person in reference has accomplished the appropriate activities.* Since accomplishing the appropriate activities is the way to achieve maturity, then someone who has accomplished all the necessary activities must be mature and acceptable, regardless of how they might live.

◆ *The person tends to teach backwards.* They begin by assigning activities that really should be the final fruit of their teaching (such as assigning cleaning the bathrooms to teach humility, or assigning working together to teach unity).

Symptoms dealing with maturity

The key signs to look for in this area are a heavy emphasis on **activity, emotions, and making declarations.**

◆ *The person confuses doing activities and feeling emotions with true growth and maturity.* They tend to equate doing things and feeling certain emotions with achieving certain growth and maturity. Therefore, if they are busy learning and ministering, then they must be growing in maturity. Or if they feel that they are growing or if they feel that they are mature, then they must be,

regardless of what their life may show.

◆ *The person declares growth and maturity, based upon a list of accomplished activities or emotions that the person in reference has felt.* They base this declaration upon the fact that this individual has completed a certain list of activities or felt a certain type of emotion, believing that these elements have caused or evidenced a corresponding change in the individual's life, rather than basing their declaration upon concrete *evidence* of a changed life.

◆ *The person separates the theoretical and emotional worlds from the real world, emphasizing the theoretical and emotional worlds.* They believe that if the proper theoretical activities are done (such as discipleship classes) or the appropriate emotions felt (such as feeling mature or feeling God's blessing), then reality will somehow come into alignment with this theory and these emotions. Therefore, they tend to emphasize the theoretical and emotional worlds over the real world, since the real world will "follow suit" with any changes made in the theoretical and emotional worlds.

◆ *The person blames themselves, feels regret, and does all sorts of penance due to their lack of commitment to maturity.* For them, the answer to their lack of commitment is responding in these theoretical and emotional ways. Somehow, this emotional and theoretical display is supposed to bring the reality of their commitment into alignment with their emotions and theory.

◆ *The person practices a ritual and repetitive religion.* Their religion tends to be filled with hollow, ritual, and repetitive actions, rather than being a religion that is vibrant, dynamic, and truly capable of transforming their nature and character.

10.

The biblical ingredients of an antidote for activism

As was mentioned earlier, the “biblical ingredients” of an antidote for any of these three poisons are the Bible verses and biblical principles that, when taught to and applied by a person suffering from this poison, will alleviate the symptoms and effects of their poisoning. Since the type and degree of poisoning can be context specific, the antidote also can be adjusted to be context specific (by stressing those verses and principles that are most effective and applicable within the given context).

Again, the following list of Bible verses by no means is exhaustive, and the reader is encouraged to add to it. However, it does illustrate the process of mixing biblical ingredients to make a final antidote. To facilitate cross-referencing these ingredients to the appropriate impacts of the poison, the category descriptions have remained the same (for example, the antidote category “ingredients focusing on teamwork and unity” refers back to the section “impact on teamwork and unity” under the description of this poison).

General ingredients

Thinking that doing is more important than being, and that by doing the right activities or feeling the right emotions we can change our nature and become what we desire to be. A person suffering from this poison tends to believe that by doing the right things or by feeling the right emotions they can change their nature. Consequently, this person also tends to place more importance on doing than on being or on becoming, because doing is the way to become. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

◆ What we do is really the fruit of what we are – in other words, doing is the *fruit* of being and not so much its *cause* (Prov. 23:7; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26; John 6:28–29 – note that this last set of verses directly answers the question “what shall we *do* to accomplish God’s work?” with the answer that *believing* is the work that we should do).

◆ True transformation comes from the renewing

of the *mind*, not from accomplishing activities (Rom. 12:1–2; John 6:28–29 – again, this last set of verses stresses *believing* as the activity that we should do).

◆ The priests and Pharisees thought that because they *performed* the right actions, they *were* pleasing to God – and God clearly stated that this was not the case (Mal. 1:10; Matt. 23:23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9).

◆ Having said this, we also need to remember that doing work is important (James 2:14–18). But we need to remember the place of those works. We do works *because* of who we are, rather than to *become* what we want to be (Eph. 2:8–10). In other words, we are not saved *by* works, but we are saved *to* work.

Focusing on doing instead of being. A person suffering from this poison tends to focus more on doing activities than on being or becoming. In part, this is due to believing that doing leads to being. In part, it also is due to their pragmatic bent, because doing is relatively quick and easy, while efforts aimed at transforming our being are much slower and more costly, thus less “efficient.” Regarding this, the Bible presents the example of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38–42). Martha was focused on *doing* activities for the Lord, hoping to thus be pleasing to Him. Mary was focused on *listening* to Christ’s message and being *transformed* by this message. Jesus praised Mary for having the proper focus (which, by the way, precluded a heavy focus on activities).

Trusting more in our own actions and abilities than in God, and trusting more in human programs and activities than in evangelism and in the change that the Holy Spirit brings through discipleship and submission. Under the influence of this poison, this person tends to place more emphasis and trust in their own actions and abilities, and in human-devised programs and activities. This is due to their emphasis on doing as versus being, which

shifts the focus from God (the source of the transformation of our being) to the human plane (the source of our actions and activities). Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ We cannot achieve the desired transformation in our strength or with our attempts (Zech. 4:6; Phil. 2:13).
- ◆ It is God Who will do the work in us (Phil. 1:6).
- ◆ We are to live in the power of God and not in our own power (Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:5; 2 Cor. 6:7; Eph. 6:10).

Confusing having success in our activities with the blessing of God. A person suffering from this poison tends to think that if they are having success in their activities, then God must be blessing them. In the New Testament, the Pharisees felt similarly, but Jesus clearly showed that their outward success in activities did not mean that God was blessing (Matt. 23:2, 5–7, 33).

Being so involved in activities that we run the risk of burnout, stagnation, and/or frustration. A person under the effects of this poison will tend to be so involved in activities that they will run a significant risk of burnout and stagnation (where the wheels are spinning rapidly, but the person isn't going anywhere). They also may feel deeply frustrated because they are so overburdened with activities, many of which are clearly of secondary importance. Regarding this, the Bible reminds us of the following.

- ◆ God Himself took time off to rest after creation (Gen. 2:2).
- ◆ Jesus withdrew from His work for a while when heard about John the Baptist's death (Matt. 14:13).
- ◆ Jesus called his disciples to separate themselves from their busy ministry for a while in order to rest (Mark 3:20; 6:31–32).
- ◆ We all have a need to be strengthened spiritually, and many times this happens in solitude (Matt. 14:23; Luke 22:41, 43).

Ingredients focusing on teamwork and unity

Confusing doing activities in proximity with being a team. A person suffering from this poison tends to think that doing things in geographical proximity with others makes them part of the team. However, true unity and cooperation are based upon much deeper matters of common agreement (Amos 3:3 – the word translated “appointment” in the New American Standard Bible carries the idea of having reached an underlying *agreement* upon something).

Confusing activity or feeling a certain emotion with productivity. Under the influence of this poison, the person tends to think that if they are doing *something* or if they feel *good* about what they are doing, then they are being *productive*. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

- ◆ What is truly productive is *believing*, and then allowing this faith to change us (John 6:28–29).
- ◆ Real character transformation, real productivity, does not flow from actions (Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26).
- ◆ True transformation comes more from renewing our mind, not so much from doing activities (Rom. 12:1–2).

Thinking from a more pragmatic viewpoint than ethical. For a person affected by this poison, achieving success in activities tends to be more important than following external rules and norms (such as the Bible, the team plan, etc.). Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ We *should* live by external rules, rather than simply looking for success in our activities (Ps. 119:11; Matt. 6:31–33; Luke 12:29–31; 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 12:9–21).
- ◆ We should live a moral life, as determined by *God's* standards (Acts 15:28–29; Col. 3:5–10; 1 Thess. 4:3).
- ◆ We should show the fruit of the Spirit, regardless of how “successful” it might seem to be (Gal. 5:22–25).

Understanding “imitate” as reproducing activities, rather than the transformation underlying these activities. A person suffering from this poison tends to define “imitate” as duplicating the *activities* of others, rather than as duplicating the *transformation* that underlies these activities. About this, the Bible says the following.

- ◆ We *are* advised to imitate others who are worthy of such imitation (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Cor. 8:1–7; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 2:14; Heb. 6:12; 12:1–3). However, we must remember that, as we saw in the introduction to this work, the New Testament word for “imitate” carries an ethical focus, and refers not so much to duplicating a pattern of *behavior*, but rather to duplicating a style of *life*.
- ◆ We also must remember *Who* it is that we are to imitate – the main object of our imitation is God (1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6).

Ingredients focusing on leadership

Confusing doing activities with being a good leader and with transforming lives.

Under the influence of this poison, a leader tends to confuse being busy with being a good leader. They also tend to confuse being busy with transforming lives. Thus, this leader tends to keep those working under him or her busy as well. The Bible has the following to say regarding this.

- ◆ What is truly productive is *believing*, and then allowing this faith to change us (John 6:28–29).
- ◆ Real character transformation, real productivity, does not flow from actions (Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26; Luke 10:38–42).
- ◆ True transformation comes more from renewing our mind, not so much from doing activities (Rom. 12:1–2).

Declaring changes based on a list of completed activities or on an emotion felt, rather than on transformed lives. A leader suffering from this poison tends to formally declare (with ceremonies, certificates, diplomas, etc.) that changes have been achieved based upon the completion of a list of activities or upon an emotion felt. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

- ◆ Intellectual assent to the truths of Scripture and outward observance of a corresponding behavior do not necessarily equate with a true *application* of and a radical *transformation* by those truths (Mark 10:17–22).
- ◆ Doing the activity does not automatically lead to the desired transformation (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:5).
- ◆ Jesus severely criticized the Pharisees for acting the part, but without any real transformation (Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9).
- ◆ Real character transformation does not flow from mere outward actions, but from the heart (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28).
- ◆ Real character transformation flows from a renewed mind (Rom. 12:1–2).

Thinking from a more pragmatic viewpoint than ethical. A leader affected by this poison will tend to base their decisions more on what is opportune and efficient, rather than what is correct and proper. The Bible says the following regarding this trait.

- ◆ We *should* live by external rules, rather than simply looking for the opportune and efficient (Ps. 119:11; Matt. 6:31–33; Luke 12:29–31; 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 12:9–21).
- ◆ We should live a moral life, as determined by *God's* standards (Acts 15:28–29; Col. 3:5–10; 1 Thess. 4:3).
- ◆ We should show the fruit of the Spirit, regardless of how opportune and efficient it might seem to be (Gal. 5:22–25).

Ingredients focusing on planning and organization

Confusing activity or emotions felt with productivity. A leader suffering from this poison will tend to confuse simply doing activities and feeling certain emotions with productivity. Thus, this leader also runs the risk of feeling that it doesn't matter so much *what* people do, just so they are doing *something*. The Bible has the following to say, regarding these traits.

- ◆ Intellectual assent to the truths of Scripture and outward observance of a corresponding behavior do not necessarily equate with a true *application* of and a radical *transformation* by those truths (Mark 10:17–22).
- ◆ Doing the activity does not automatically lead to the desired transformation (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:5).
- ◆ Jesus severely criticized the Pharisees for acting the part, but without any real transformation (Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9).
- ◆ Real character transformation does not flow from mere outward actions, but from the heart (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28).
- ◆ Real character transformation flows from a renewed mind (Rom. 12:1–2).
- ◆ It *does* matter what we do, because there is only one principal work, and that is believing in Christ and allowing Him to transform our being (John 6:28–29).

Making activities more important than planning and organizing. For this type of a leader, planning and organizing seem to be largely a waste of time. These activities are too slow, and this person and their workers could be out doing something *productive*. However, the Bible reminds us that planning and organizing *are* important (Matt. 7:26–27; Luke 14:28–32; Acts 6:1–4).

Trying to reproduce activities without having previously reproduced the reality that underlies these activities and gives them meaning. A leader suffering from this poison will tend to try to reproduce activities, but without taking the time to achieve the transformation of the reality that underlies these activities and gives them meaning. When this occurs, their actions tend to be “hollow.” Regarding this, the Bible reminds us of the following.

- ◆ Doing the activity does not automatically lead to the desired transformation (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:5).
- ◆ Jesus severely criticized the Pharisees for projecting false images (Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33;

Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47).

◆ Real character transformation does not flow from mere outward actions, but from the heart (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28).

◆ Real character transformation flows from a renewed mind (Rom. 12:1–2).

Thinking from a more pragmatic viewpoint than ethical. For a leader suffering from this poison, achieving success in their activities tends to be more important than following external rules and norms (such as the Bible, a team’s plan, a church’s plan, etc.). Regarding this trait, the Bible says the following.

◆ We *should* live by external rules, rather than simply looking for what will bring us success (Ps. 119:11; Matt. 6:31–33; Luke 12:29–31; 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 12:9–21).

◆ We should live a moral life, following *God’s* standards (Acts 15:28–29; Col. 3:5–10; 1 Thess. 4:3).

◆ We should show the fruit of the Spirit, regardless of how successful it might seem to make us (Gal. 5:22–25).

Lacking stability and focus. Under the influence of this poison, a leader tends to lack stability and focus. They tend to jump around, following whatever path seems to offer the greatest success. Regarding this, the Bible reminds us that we should be steadfast and perseverant (Luke 8:15; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 15:58; Col. 1:23; 2 Thess. 1:4; 2 Pet. 1:5–7).

Ingredients focusing on teaching and discipleship

Confusing doing activities with being a good teacher or student and confusing activity or an emotion felt with having understood and applied the truth taught. A teacher or student under the effects of this poison will tend to confuse being busy with being a good teacher or student. They will also tend to confuse being busy or feeling a certain emotion with true transformation (the understanding and application of the truth taught). This will lead this person to tend to focus more on the accomplishment of activities than on the actual transformation of lives, and on the announcement of the truth than on its application. Regarding these traits, the Bible has the following to say.

◆ Intellectual assent to the truths of Scripture and outward observance of a corresponding behavior do not necessarily equate with a true *application* of and a radical *transformation* by those truths (Mark 10:17–22).

◆ Doing the activity does not automatically lead to the desired transformation (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:5).

◆ Jesus severely criticized the Pharisees for acting the part, but without any real transformation (Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9).

◆ Real character transformation does not flow from mere outward actions, but from the heart (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28).

◆ Real character transformation flows from a renewed mind (Rom. 12:1–2).

Declaring growth and maturity based on a list of completed activities or on some emotions felt, rather than on transformed lives. A teacher suffering from this poison tends to formally declare (with ceremonies, certificates, diplomas, etc.) that changes have been achieved based upon the completion of a list of activities or upon certain emotions having been felt. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

◆ Intellectual assent to the truths of Scripture and outward observance of a corresponding behavior do not necessarily equate with a true *application* of and a radical *transformation* by those truths (Mark 10:17–22).

◆ Doing the activity does not automatically lead to the desired transformation (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:5).

◆ Jesus severely criticized the Pharisees for projecting false images (Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47).

◆ Real character transformation does not flow from mere outward actions, but from the heart (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28).

◆ Real character transformation flows from a renewed mind (Rom. 12:1–2).

Thinking that we have already changed our nature because of our behavior. A teacher or student suffering from this poison tends to think that they have already achieved the necessary changes in their nature when they have exhibited the proper behavior. This can actually end up inoculating them *against true* changes because they end up thinking that they don’t need anything else. It also encourages them to put up with immature Christians who happen to *act* right. Regarding this, the Bible reminds us of the following.

◆ Intellectual assent to the truths of Scripture and outward observance of a corresponding behavior do not necessarily equate with a true *application* of and a radical *transformation* by those truths (Mark 10:17–22).

◆ Doing the activity does not automatically lead to the desired transformation (Isa. 29:13; Mal.

1:10; 2 Tim. 3:5).

◆ Jesus severely criticized the Pharisees for projecting false images (Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47).

◆ Real character transformation does not flow from mere outward actions, but from the heart (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28).

◆ Real character transformation flows from a renewed mind (Rom. 12:1–2).

Teaching backwards. A teacher under the influence of this poison tends to begin their teaching by assigning activities that really ought to be more the final fruit of their instruction. Regarding this, the same set of biblical truths that we have used so far in this category continues to be applicable.

◆ Intellectual assent to the truths of Scripture and outward observance of a corresponding behavior do not necessarily equate with a true *application* of and a radical *transformation* by those truths (Mark 10:17–22).

◆ Doing the activity does not automatically lead to the desired transformation (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:5).

◆ Jesus severely criticized the Pharisees for acting the part, but without any real transformation (Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47).

◆ Real character transformation does not flow from mere outward actions, but from the heart (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28).

◆ Real character transformation flows from a renewed mind (Rom. 12:1–2).

Ingredients focusing on maturity

Confusing doing activities and feeling emotions with true growth and maturity. We saw this trait at the beginning of the previous section as well, but from the focus of being a teacher or student. Once again, the biblical truths that deal with true maturity as versus hollow actions are applicable here.

◆ Intellectual assent to the truths of Scripture and outward observance of a corresponding behavior do not necessarily equate with a true *application* of and a radical *transformation* by those truths (Mark 10:17–22).

◆ Doing the activity does not automatically lead to the desired transformation (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:5).

◆ Jesus severely criticized the Pharisees for projecting false images (Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47).

◆ Real character transformation does not flow

from mere outward actions, but from the heart (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28).

◆ Real character transformation flows from a renewed mind (Rom. 12:1–2).

Being so involved in activities that we jeopardize the transformation we look for. A person under the effects of this poison will tend to be so involved in activities that they will find it hard to take the time necessary to actually *internalize* what they are learning and *apply* it to the transformation of their lives. Regarding this trait, the Bible says the following.

◆ The classical example of this trait is the “Martha complex,” which Jesus gently criticized as not having chosen the better route (Luke 10:38–42).

◆ Jesus called his disciples to separate themselves from their busy ministry for a while in order to rest (Mark 3:20; 6:31–32).

◆ We all have a need to be strengthened spiritually, and many times this happens in relative solitude (Matt. 14:23; Luke 22:41, 43).

Declaring growth and maturity based on a list of completed activities or on some emotions felt, rather than on transformed lives. A person suffering from this poison tends to declare that changes have been achieved based upon the completion of a list of activities or upon certain emotions having been felt. As we have seen, the Bible says the following regarding this.

◆ Intellectual assent to the truths of Scripture and outward observance of a corresponding behavior do not necessarily equate with a true *application* of and a radical *transformation* by those truths (Mark 10:17–22).

◆ Doing the activity does not automatically lead to the desired transformation (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:5).

◆ Jesus severely criticized the Pharisees for projecting false images (Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47).

◆ Real character transformation does not flow from mere outward actions, but from the heart (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28).

◆ Real character transformation flows from a renewed mind (Rom. 12:1–2).

Separating the theoretical world or the emotional world from the real world. Under the effects of this poison, a person will tend to think that if the proper *theoretical* activities are done (or if the proper *emotions* are felt), then their real-world behavior will somehow magically come into alignment with this theory. Regarding this trait, the Bible reminds us that we ought not to separate the theoretical world from the real one,

but rather that we should lead *integral* lives (Matt. 23:5–7, 14, 23, 25–27; Mark 7:6; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47; 2 Cor. 1:17–18; James 5:12).

Feigning a change when it is just mere activity. A person suffering from this poison is seriously tempted to *feign* a change, thinking that it doesn't matter so much if they apply the truths, as long as they can act like the desired product. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

◆ We should not take pride in *appearance* (actions) but in a transformation of our *heart* (2 Cor. 5:12).

◆ We should not lie to each other, as is the case when we project an illusion rather than the truth (Col. 3:9).

◆ We should speak the truth in love because we

are all one family, therefore, we shouldn't project false appearances (Eph. 4:15, 25).

◆ Jesus severely criticized the Pharisees for projecting false images (Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47).

Practicing a ritual and repetitive religion. A person under the effects of this poison tends to practice a religion that is more ritual and repetitive than dynamic and transforming. Regarding this, the Bible reminds us that a ritualistic and repetitive religion is neither pleasing to God nor adequate to transform our nature (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:6–10, 12–14; 2:17; 3:14–15; Matt. 6:7; 15:7–9; Mark 7:6–13 – please note that all of these verses refer to a population that was actively *doing* worship, but in a hollow, ritual way).

11.

The poison of passivity

The last poison that we will study is that of passivity. In chapter two we saw a basic definition of this poison, and we saw how religious and historical factors have promoted its development as well as creating a greater susceptibility to it among the Latin American population. Now we need to study this poison a little more in depth.

Description

As we have seen, this poison basically causes the affected person to believe that the best way to fulfill the appropriate activities (signaled by the other two poisons) involves the use of substitutes. Basically, the idea here is to allow *others* (preferably the “experts”) to develop the required solution, and then the “common” person simply adopts that solution. This is much easier and faster than having to develop the solution ourselves, and it is more secure, too, since any mistakes in the solution can always be blamed on the “expert” that developed it.

Substitutes at the level of ideology and programs. There are substitutes at the level of ideology and programs, where a person (or an entire congregation) affected by this poison adopts an *entire system*. For example, a congregation may adopt an entire program of evangelism, developed by “experts” in North America and proven highly effective within the North American church context. Or they may adopt an entire program of discipleship developed by “experts” in Korea and proven highly effective within the Korean church context. Or they may adopt an entire program of church growth developed by “experts” in China and proven highly effective within the clandestine Chinese church context. Or they may adopt an entire program of worship developed by “experts” in some megachurch in Latin America and proven highly effective within this church. And the examples can (and do) go on and on.

But no matter where the program or ideology happens to come from, there are some key ele-

ments in common. First, it has been developed by recognized “experts.” Second, it is a complete “package deal” ready for immediate use (and thus very attractive to the pragmatic mind). Third, it has been proven to be highly effective (and thus again very attractive to the pragmatic mind). And fourth, it has been *adopted* (as versus adapted). In other words, it is imported with minimal transformations (mostly linguistic), and it is “applied” by duplicating the *activities* performed by the original designers. However, those who are now performing these activities many times do not adequately understand the program they are implementing, nor have they achieved the knowledge and spiritual transformations that the original designers achieved through the development of the program. Instead, suffering from the poison of democratized feudalism, they take advantage of, or “expropriate,” the developments of others without having gone through the developmental process. And, suffering from the poison of activism, they think that by duplicating the activities, they will also duplicate the success that this program has enjoyed. And then everyone wonders why such a useful and obviously beneficial program failed to function in the expected way in the Latin American context. *The underlying base of the program, upon which the program’s success rode, is missing.*

Substitutes at the level of individual activities. There are also substitutes at the level of the individual activities themselves. This occurs when a person under the influence of this poison and the poison of democratized feudalism takes advantage of, or “expropriates,” the activities that have been achieved by others. For example, a church leader, rather than actually studying, analyzing, and grappling with the biblical text himself, may depend more upon books written by “experts” who have studied this portion of Scripture. Thus, he copies large portions from commentaries and other Bible helps, and then reads them directly in his sermon or Bible study, tied together with some sentences of his own creation. Or, to

cite another example, a “common” member of the congregation may not feel that they actually *need* to study the Bible themselves. Rather, they may turn that activity over to their pastor (the “expert”). Thus, a person suffering from these poisons may simply come on Sunday morning and “expropriate” the biblical knowledge that their pastor has acquired. In both of these examples, the end result is that the actual Bible study is *relegated* to the “experts,” and the basic responsibility that the individual feels is to simply listen (or read) the truth as expounded by these “experts.”

Once again, with all of this, I am not speaking against using commentaries and other Bible helps. These are *great* resources, as long as they stay nothing more than helps. The problem is that for an individual under the influence of these three poisons, and especially the poison of passivity, these are not used as *helps*, but rather as *substitutes* for that individual’s own personal Bible study. He or she reads or listens to the biblical truths being expounded, and then they simply adopt the conclusions without truly *processing* the

information that lead to those conclusions.

The problem with this poison

The problem with the poison of passivity is that it short circuits the entire learning process. Facts are tucked away in the mind without them ever having passed through or impacted the heart. And this leads to very serious negative repercussions with regard to discipleship and maturity (areas in which the Latin American churches have significant problems, as was seen in the first chapter of this study).

This poison offers a finished product without having to go through the arduous process of studying, analyzing, developing, and implementing that product. Unfortunately, it is in this arduous process that the real *learning* and *transformation* of life occur. Thus, this poison short circuits both learning and transformation, which means that it short circuits maturity. The individual is allowed to display the finished product as a hollow facade. It may *look* good, but there is nothing inside.

12.

The impact of passivity

In the previous chapter describing this poison, we introduced some of the ways that it can negatively impact an individual or a church. Now we will take a closer look at the negative impact this poison can have. Once again, our analysis will follow a similar outline to the analysis of democratized feudalism and activism, making it easier to cross-reference between these three poisons.

General impact

A tendency to think that “imitating” means duplicating plans and programs. A person suffering from this poison tends to think that “imitate” means to duplicate the plans and programs designed by others. Therefore, they “imitate” their Korean brothers and sisters by trying to duplicate or replicate an exact copy of a discipleship program developed by these Koreans. They fail to realize that the success of this program is based, at least in part, upon the growth that occurred through the *process* of developing this program.

Let’s look at this example a little more closely. First, the Korean church realized that they needed a discipleship program. Second, they analyzed their needs as a group. Third, they studied what the Bible has to say about these needs. Fourth, they put together a program that taught these biblical truths and encouraged their application to the Korean believers’ lives. And fifth, they implemented the program. As you can see, there was a lot of learning that occurred in the *process* of developing the program. And the program’s final pertinence and effectiveness depend greatly upon that learning.

However, a person under the influence of this poison is encouraged to jump from step one (realization of the need of a discipleship program) directly to step five (implementation of a prepackaged program), without passing through steps two to four. *It is steps two to four that lead to the growth and maturity that underlie the program and make it so effective in a Korean context.* But

what happens under the influence of passivity is that a Korean program, designed to meet Korean needs in a Korean way, is transplanted to Latin America ... and fails (at least usually). It doesn’t speak to Latin American needs (step two). It doesn’t teach the Bible verses that speak to Latin American reality (step three). And it doesn’t encourage the application of these verses in a Latin American way (step four).

Rather than imitating a developed *program*, our churches should be imitating the *process* that gave birth to that program. And by going through this *whole* process, we are not just doing needless duplication of efforts or “reinventing the wheel.” We are avoiding a short circuit in the maturing and discipleship process.

A tendency to think that “imitating” knowledge means reading and informing ourselves about what others have written and thought. This second tendency is very similar to the first, except that it is given a theoretical bent. Now, rather than duplicating plans or programs, we are talking about duplicating ideas or thoughts. A person suffering from this poison tends to think that to “imitate” knowledge means to duplicate the ideas or thoughts of others who are more wise than themselves. Therefore, they “imitate” the Bible commentators by repeating their very words, sometimes without even truly understanding what the commentator meant to say.

Let’s look at this example a little more closely, and we will see that it parallels the previous tendency. First, the commentator realized that there was a need to explain a biblical text or principle. Second, they analyzed this need in order to understand it thoroughly. Third, they studied and analyzed what the Bible has to say about this topic. Fourth, they organized their ideas into a coherent presentation of biblical facts. And fifth, they recorded it all in a polished, written form. Again, as you can see, there was a lot of learning that occurred in the *process* of developing their commen-

tary. And their commentary's final pertinence and effectiveness depend greatly upon that learning.

However, a person under the influence of this poison is encouraged once again to jump from step one (realization of the need to explain a biblical text or principle) directly to step five (repeating the polished, written final product), without passing through steps two to four. *It is steps two to four that lead to the growth and maturity that underlie the commentary and make it so effective.* But what happens under the influence of passivity is that the wording of the commentary is read to the congregation, but many times without having adequately analyzed or understood the underlying need (step two), without having truly grappled with what the biblical text has to say about this need (step three), and without understanding how these biblical facts fit together into a coherent presentation of information (step four). Thus, the person reading the commentary's comments many times cannot explain them, elaborate on them, or extrapolate from them.

Rather than imitating a developed package of *knowledge*, our churches should be imitating the *process* that gave birth to that knowledge. This does not mean that we cannot use Bible helps. It does mean that we should only be using them to *help* us gain knowledge, rather than short circuiting the process.

A tendency to lack an adequate base for the successful implementation of a program. This is a corresponding tendency linked to the first tendency in this group. Under the influence of this poison, a person tends to lack an adequate base for the successful implementation of a program. As we have seen, they tend to jump from step one to step five. Therefore, they also tend to lack steps two through four. And we have seen that steps two through four provide the adequate base for the successful implementation of a program. So, by skipping these steps, they also fail to build the base upon which the whole program rests.

A tendency to practice a ritual and repetitive religion. A person suffering from this poison tends to practice a rather shallow ritual and repetitive religion. All the real learning is done by *others*. And *others* experience the transforming power of the Scriptures. Sadly, this person tends to just read about it or act it out, but without experiencing the real thing. Their passivity has predisposed them to allow others to live the Christian life for them and to grow for them. Thus, rather than practicing a dynamic and transforming religion, they tend to have a ritual and

repetitive one of duplicating activities in hopes that they will somehow lead to the desired finished product.

Impact on interpersonal relations

A tendency to use and possibly abuse the contributions of others (experts, professionals, saints, clergy, team members). Coupling the poison of passivity with that of democratized feudalism, a person suffering from these two poisons very easily can experience a tendency to use and even abuse the contributions of others. Passivity causes them to lean toward using others, and democratized feudalism gives them the power to "expropriate" the work of others as their own. Thus, a pastor may get up on Sunday morning and read long sections out of commentaries as if they were his own ideas. Or the head of a ministry may claim credit for work done by those working for his or her ministry. Or a church member may repeat elements of the Sunday sermon to others, as if they were his or her own personal ideas, but without even understanding completely what they are saying.

The closer that this "borrowing" comes to home, the more destructive it may be on interpersonal relations. For example, no commentator is likely to be offended if someone quotes his or her ideas as if they were their own. But if the director of a ministry abuses the contributions of those working under them, then interpersonal relations can very easily become strained. The same is even more true in a team context. If one team member abuses the contributions of another team member, then interpersonal relations are almost certainly going to be strained. For example, let's suppose that the team is developing their five-year plan, and one team member overhears another discussing a possible improvement that they have developed to add to that plan. Then this first team member presents that improvement before the other can, and takes credit for having thought of it. Actions like this easily can drive a wedge between team members.

A tendency to feel a strong dependence on and loyalty to the professional leaders. Under the influence of this poison, a person feels a strong dependence on and loyalty to the professional leaders (the "experts"). This again shows evidences of cross-poisoning with democratized feudalism and the loyalty that a vassal owes to their lord. The effect of this is that they don't question or analyze or think about the validity of what the professional leader says. They don't take

the time to compare it with Scripture. They simply accept it, and defend it. But since they haven't analyzed it, their defense tends to lack a rational quality about it. They defend it as right, but without knowing why they believe it is right ... other than the fact that the right person said it.

A tendency to be neither innovative nor entrepreneurial. A person affected by this poison tends to depend upon *others* to be innovative and entrepreneurial. They believe that personally they are not equipped or able to think so independently. Therefore, they tend to be very traditional in their outlook and conservative in their thinking. They also tend to view as dangerous any innovative or entrepreneurial spirit exhibited by anyone other than the professional leaders. Again, you can see how this poison dovetails with democratized feudalism and its subservient vassals.

A tendency to expect the same type of dependence, loyalty, and subservience from those who serve under them. A person suffering from this poison will tend to see themselves as the "professional leader" in any group that they may happen to lead, and they will expect that their workers show them the same type of dependency, loyalty, and subservience that we have seen in the previous two tendencies. Thus, directors of ministries, team leaders, etc. tend to keep a tight rein on their workers, and they tend to feel seriously threatened if any of their workers begin to show an innovative or entrepreneurial spirit.

Impact on teamwork and unity

A tendency to depend too much on others, especially the experts. Team members who are suffering from this poison tend to depend too much on others, and especially on the experts. They tend not to think too creatively, and if they can't quote an expert, then they don't have too much to say. And if there is no "expert" among their team members, then they tend not to depend very much upon their other team members, either. Rather, they expect all the team members to depend upon the same experts upon which they themselves depend, and view with suspicion any innovative or entrepreneurial thinking on the part of any "common" team member.

On international teams, where many of the team members do not suffer the same degree of intoxication from this poison, and who do feel a freedom (and *responsibility*) to think in a more innovative fashion, this can lead to driving a serious wedge between this affected individual and the

other team members. And on a team composed of individuals who all are affected by this poison, then this can lock up all creative thinking until some expert, universally recognized by all the team members as a trusted authority, happens to say the precise creative thing that this team needs to hear. Otherwise, the leader of this team, as the local "expert," will have to unilaterally design a solution (and thus negate the benefits of working in a team).

A tendency not to take any interdependent initiative with the other "common" team members. Under the influence of this poison, the affected team member tends to avoid taking any kind of initiative, and especially any interdependent initiative with any of the "common" team members. Initiative, like innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit, is best reserved for the experts and the professional leaders. Thus, this person can be very quiet and even appear uncooperative when mixed with an international team that does not share his or her intoxication with this poison.

A tendency to use and possibly abuse the contributions of others. We saw this tendency under the category of "Impact on interpersonal relations," but it is worth briefly mentioning again here in this context. A team member suffering from this poison will tend to "borrow" or use the contributions of the other team members, and possibly even in an abusive fashion (where they "expropriate" the contribution and make it their own). Such behavior can have serious repercussions on teamwork and team unity.

A tendency to be more isolated from the team process than committed to it. Under the influence of this poison, an affected team member tends to be more isolated from the team process than committed to it. They feel that choosing to be strongly committed to something probably is an activity best left to the professionals and experts. As a "common" team member, they are *loyal* to the "professional leader" of the team, but being loyal to the leader is quite different from being committed to the *process* of being or becoming a team. Regarding their fellow "common" team members, this individual doesn't really tend to feel much commitment or true interdependency with them. These feelings are too close to being innovative, and therefore threaten this individual and the loyalty they feel to the team leader. In other words, commitment to fellow "common" team members and loyalty to the team leader may very well be interpreted as being in competition, rather

than being synonymous.

Impact on leadership

A tendency to base their position on the merits and achievements of others. A leader suffering from the poison of passivity tends to base his or her ascension to leader on the merits and achievements of others, especially the experts. In a way, this is the logical conclusion of living a lifestyle that places so much emphasis on duplicating the ideas and programs of the experts and on avoiding unnecessary innovation. The person advances to leadership based upon the merits and achievements of *others*. Unfortunately, this also means that they may not have personally developed the abilities and maturity that their position implies, and this can be a great stimulus for a possible inferiority complex and/or insecurity complex (as we saw with democratized feudalism).

A tendency to expect that their followers depend on them, be loyal to them, and be subservient to them as leaders. Under the influence of this poison, this leader tends to expect that his or her followers (those who work under their leadership) will exhibit the same degree of dependence, loyalty, and subservience that this leader exhibits toward the experts. As such, these followers should not exhibit any serious innovative or entrepreneurial spirit, but rather should allow this leader basically to think, act, and decide for them in many cases. After all, he or she is the “professional leader” to which these followers should look, at least according to this poison.

Impact on planning and organization

A tendency to use programs developed by others living in other contexts. We saw this tendency under the section “General impact,” but it is worth briefly mentioning again here in this context. A strategist that suffers from this poison will tend to adopt programs that have been developed by experts who oftentimes are living in other contexts. Thus, the programs this strategist proposes tend to be foreign to his or her context and lack pertinence. Also, by not developing their own program, this person tends to short circuit the growth that occurs through this process. For more details, please see the comments under the section “General impact.”

A tendency to imitate patterns of behavior that belong to these imported programs, but without understanding the reality that

underlies and gives meaning to these activities and programs. Again, this tendency is discussed under the section “General impact,” but it also is worth mentioning here. Under the influence of this poison, a strategist tends to duplicate or replicate behavior (actions or activities), but without having gone through the formative process of developing and designing these activities. Therefore, these tend to be “hollow” activities, divorced from their original content and meaning. For example, this strategist may attempt to implement a program by requiring that all those who work under him or her do a certain list of activities that the original founders of the program did. However, this individual doesn’t really understand *why* these activities are being done, or *how* they fit in and contribute to the program. They only know that they are part of the program and must be done. Therefore, when anyone under them happens to ask why they are being required to do these activities or what they accomplish, this strategist cannot answer their question, because they do not really understand the place of the activity within the program.

A tendency to lack an adequate base for actually implementing a program with success. This is the logical conclusion of the two previous tendencies. Since this strategist doesn’t really understand the program, nor the activities involved in the program, then they lack an adequate base upon which to implement the program with success. They are simply following *others* in their thinking, their philosophy, their strategy, and their very actions. But they don’t adequately understand the reality of these other individuals, nor the process that brought them to where they got to be. Therefore, this strategist tends to do *mechanical duplication with minimal comprehension*. And this is a far cry from the solid base that a strategist needs to truly and successfully communicate and implement plans and programs.

Impact on teaching and discipleship

A tendency to teach the behavioral patterns and the bubble of others (the experts), instead of teaching and applying biblical truths and principles. A teacher suffering from this poison tends to teach and communicate the behavioral patterns (actions and activities), the bubble (philosophy, lifestyle, etc.), and the study and conclusions of *others*, especially the experts. Again, innovative thinking and an entrepreneurial spirit are things best left to the professionals and experts. So, this teacher tends to limit his or her

teaching to what the experts have done, said, thought, and studied. But a personal and deep examination of the needs surrounding them and the biblical truths and principles that speak to these needs many times are far too innovative and risky for this teacher. They would rather teach the safe and easy opinions of the experts, and maybe consult with their pastor from time to time for any additional content.

A tendency not to think in an innovative and interdependent manner. Under the influence of this poison, a teacher (and this also is true of their students as well) tends not to think in an innovative and interdependent manner. The previous tendency showed how they lack innovative thinking. But they also lack *interdependent* thinking as well. Why? Because interdependent thinking means getting together with their peers to study, analyze, and see what the Bible has to say about something. Since their peers tend to be “commoners” like themselves, lacking any experts among their numbers, then getting together to discuss something with them is somewhat analogous to pooling everyone’s ignorance in hopes of coming up with a solution. *Thinking is best left to the professionals*, or at least so says this poison. And if there happens to be an expert among their numbers, then practically all thinking (and especially innovative thinking) will be relegated to this individual, with the rest tending to adopt whatever they say. In other words, a teacher and students suffering from this poison tend to be very dependent in their thinking and very traditional in their outlook.

A tendency to prefer that their students get their instruction and information from them, rather than investigating and studying the Bible for themselves. Since innovation and interdependent thinking are dangerous and best left to the trained professionals, and since they, as teacher, are the local “expert” in their classroom, then a teacher affected by this poison tends to prefer that their students not think in an innovative and interdependent fashion, investigating and studying the Bible on their own. Rather, they prefer that their students get their instruction and information from them as teacher. In other words, this teacher is the local “expert” whose behavioral patterns, bubble, study, and conclusions are worthy of duplication.

It’s interesting, but in the year 1229, and suffering from the poisons of feudalism and passivity, the Roman Catholic Church did something very similar. They forbad that the members of their congregations read their Bibles. It was too

dangerous to have all these people reading God’s Word and thinking that they could understand it and apply it correctly. Heresies would spring up all over. *Thinking (including Bible study, interpretation, and application) was best left to the trained professionals*. And that ruling stayed in effect until the Second Vatican Council in 1962. In other words, for almost 750 years the Roman Catholic Church would not let its members read the Bible. And this is part of *our* churches’ religious inheritance, too.

Impact on maturity

A tendency to depend upon others for growth and for the solutions to life’s problems, rather than attempting to solve these through an innovative and interdependent spirit. As has been seen, a person suffering from this poison tends to depend heavily upon others for their own personal growth and for the solutions to their own life’s problems. The interesting thing is that many times these *others* do not even know or understand this individual’s life’s problems and growth needs, but they are looked to in order to provide solutions. And this is seen as preferable and safer than having this individual attempt to solve these needs through an innovative and interdependent study of the Scriptures themselves. In other words, according to this poison, those who *best* understand the needs that ought to be met (i.e., the individual themselves) are the *worst* ones to solve these needs, and those who *least* understand these needs (i.e., the professionals and experts) are the *best* ones to solve them. It should be rather obvious that this poison not only shorts circuits maturity, but it also tends to condemn a person to adopting solutions that are less than pertinent and effective.

A tendency to be more an imitator than an innovator. Under the influence of this poison, a person tends to be more an *imitator* of the professionals and experts than an *innovator* who trusts their own God-given gifts and abilities.

A tendency to see innovation as something dangerous. A person affected by this poison tends to see innovation as something that is dangerous. Just like the Roman Catholic Church in 1229, they would rather leave the thinking to the trained professionals and just adopt whatever they say. After all, the professionals ought to know. And how can they, as a “commoner,” ever expect to differ with a professional?

A tendency to miss out on the growth

that comes through developing and implementing their own programs and plans. As has been mentioned in the previous sections, a person suffering from this poison tends to jump directly from need to implementation of a program, thus skipping the intermediate steps where true growth, maturity, and application of the Scriptures occur. In other words, this poison tends to short circuit maturity and growth by encouraging this individual to jump directly to implementing someone else's program or plan.

A tendency to confuse passivity with growth and maturity. Under the influence of this poison, a person tends to confuse passivity (fulfilling the activities and adopting the ideas and philosophies prescribed by others) with growth and maturity. In other words, they think that by doing the prescribed activities and by believing the prescribed ideas and philosophies, they will magically grow. In short, they try to let others grow for them, or more correctly, they try to absorb and adopt the growth of others. This is the essence of passivity. And in so doing, they fail to truly study and apply the Scriptures for themselves. Of course, they *read* the Scriptures. But many times it is not with an eye toward comprehension and application, but rather as passively fulfilling an activity prescribed by others.

A tendency to be very loyal to their church and to their superiors. Since a person affected by this poison exhibits a heavy dependence upon professionals and experts, then they also tend to be very loyal to these individuals. They *must* be loyal, or these individuals aren't worthy of their dependence. And they *must* depend upon someone. In a church setting, the local professionals and experts tend to be the pastor and church leaders, who tend to be equated with the church as a whole, so this loyalty transfers across

as being very loyal to their church and to their church's denomination. And anything that goes against the teaching of these entities oftentimes is seen as being very suspect, or at least very doubtful.

Impact on the unresolved problems of the bubble

Inferiority. A person suffering from this poison has a marked tendency to develop a sense of inferiority. They think that they are not the best ones to design proper plans and programs. They think that they are not the best ones to determine proper patterns of behavior. They think that they are not the best ones to study the Scriptures and suggest applications. Rather, they think that all of these activities are best left to the trained professionals and experts. In other words, all that this affected person can safely do is simply absorb and adopt the behavioral patterns (actions and activities), the bubble (philosophy, lifestyle, etc.), and the study and conclusions of *others*.

Insecurity. A person suffering from this poison also has a marked tendency to develop a sense of insecurity. This is a direct consequence of their sense of inferiority, which tells them that they are not the appropriate person to attempt anything that might be innovative, entrepreneurial, or interdependent. Therefore, they feel *very* insecure anytime they get anywhere close to a possibly "dangerous" activity (and there are a lot of them). Over the years, this insecurity can become a general feeling of *apathy* and *stagnation*. After all, what is left for them to do? All they can do is follow passively along, doing the same things over and over, keeping the same traditions, never branching out on their own. They believe themselves incapable of doing anything different, and they are afraid to try.

13.

The symptoms of passivity

What are some of the principal symptoms that a person might be suffering from poisoning by passivity? The following is a list of 30 symptoms, divided according to the same categories as were seen in the previous chapter. Please note that this is not an exhaustive listing of all possible symptoms, as different contexts will respond differently to this poison. However, it is believed to be a fairly extensive listing of the basic symptoms. If the reader desires further details regarding any particular symptom, please refer back to the corresponding section of the previous chapter.

Once again, in order to help identify the degree of poisoning, these symptoms generally are presented in their extreme or severe form. *This means that many times a poisoned individual will evidence symptoms that are similar to but less extreme than those described.* They can still be poisoned. And by making a comparison with this description of severe symptoms, we can analyze the approximate *degree* to which the patient is suffering from this poison.

General symptoms

In this area, the key signs to look for are a heavy emphasis on **taking advantage of (“expropriation”)** and **dependence**.

◆ *The person takes advantage of or “expropriates” the achievements, contributions, and merits of others.* This is one of the classic symptoms of passivity, which places a strong emphasis on using others (saints, professionals, experts, etc.) to help achieve a person’s goals.

◆ *The person depends heavily on others for the achievement of their goals.* This is another of the classic symptoms of passivity, which places a strong emphasis on depending on others (popes, priests, pastors, etc.) to help achieve a person’s goals.

◆ *The person feels a strong sense of inferiority.* Since they tend to depend so much upon others and the abilities and achievements of others, they end up lacking faith in their own gifts and abili-

ties.

◆ *The person feels a strong sense of insecurity.* Since they tend to believe that they are not truly capable of doing anything innovative, entrepreneurial, or interdependent, then they feel very insecure anytime they get anywhere close to this type of a “dangerous” activity.

◆ *The person feels a strong sense of apathy and/or stagnation.* Since they tend to be afraid to try anything new, all that is left to do are the same old “safe” activities over and over and over. And they may be very busy doing these “safe” activities, but they are not progressing. The wheels of activity may be spinning at full speed, but this person isn’t going anywhere very fast.

◆ *The person practices a ritual and “indirect” religion.* Their religion tends to be ritual because they are doing the same “hollow” activities over and over. And their religion tends to be indirect because they employ so many substitutes in helping achieve their goals. All of this also means that their religion tends not to be a dynamic, transforming religion.

Symptoms dealing with interpersonal relations

In this area, the key sign to look for is a **feudal relationship**.

◆ *The person takes advantage of or “expropriates” the achievements, contributions, and merits of those serving under them.* The poison of passivity places a strong emphasis on using others to help achieve a person’s goals. When this is coupled with the poison of democratized feudalism, the affected person can see themselves as a feudal lord presiding over their vassals (those who serve under them). As such, these vassals tend to be seen as raw material which this lord may mine for his or her own benefit.

◆ *The person depends heavily on those who serve under them for the achievement of their goals.* The poison of passivity also places a strong emphasis on depending on others to help achieve a person’s

goals. When coupled with the poison of democratized feudalism, the affected person can see themselves as a feudal lord managing the affairs of their vassals so that these individuals' efforts are aimed at fulfilling the desires of this lord. Please note that although this may look like delegation, at least on the surface, it is actually closer to exploitation.

◆ *The person is neither innovative nor entrepreneurial, unless they are the lord of the context.* As long as there is a higher lord in the context (such as a team leader or pastor), this individual feels obligated to depend upon this lord, be loyal to them, and serve them (the typical obligations of a vassal to their lord). And because of this, they will tend to be neither innovative nor entrepreneurial.

◆ *The person expects that those working under them be neither innovative nor entrepreneurial.* In this particular context, this individual now fulfills the role of lord, so he or she expects that those serving under them feel obligated to depend upon them as lord, be loyal to them, and serve them (again, the typical obligations of a vassal to their lord). Because of this, they tend to expect that these individuals will be neither innovative nor entrepreneurial, but rather leave the thinking to the local official leader.

◆ *The person develops a concept of "body life" that is hierarchical, dependent, loyal, and servile.* To this individual suffering from this poison, they tend to have a concept of church or team "body life" where the body is very dependent on their leaders, is very loyal to these leaders, and serves these leaders. Thus, elements like innovation, interdependence, and an entrepreneurial spirit don't fit within their concept of proper "body life." In other words, they have a feudal concept of "body life."

Symptoms dealing with teamwork and unity

In this area, the key signs to look for are a heavy emphasis on **taking advantage of ("expropriation")** and **dependence**.

◆ *The person depends heavily upon others, especially the team leader and other experts.* They will place a very large amount of dependence upon what the "experts" (including the official team leader) do, say, and think. However, this dependency many times will not extend to the more "common" members of the team, thus ruling out interdependence.

◆ *The person lacks an interdependent, innovative spirit.* To them, both interdependence with "commoners" and innovation are dangerous. Thinking and planning is best left to the trained profession-

als and experts (such as the team leader).

◆ *The person uses and abuses the efforts and achievements of others.* To them, their team members (excluding the leader) are more "raw material" than colleagues, and they may feel free to "mine" this raw material for their own benefit.

◆ *The person is more isolated from the team process than committed to it.* This person feels that choosing a commitment is something best left to the professionals. So, they tend not to develop a high personal level of commitment to the team or to the process of being or becoming a team. Rather, they tend to remain somewhat isolated.

Symptoms dealing with leadership

In this area, the key signs to look for are a heavy emphasis on **taking advantage of ("expropriation")** and **feudal relationships**.

◆ *The person bases their position as leader upon the merits and achievements of others.* The poison of passivity causes this leader to tend to "expropriate" or "mine" the raw materials of their vassals, and then employ this to his or her personal benefit as leader (or as a rising leader). This is what a feudal lord does with their vassal's contributions.

◆ *The person expects that those who serve under them will depend upon them, be loyal to them, and serve them faithfully.* Once again, these are the typical obligations of a vassal to their feudal lord.

Symptoms dealing with planning and organization

In this area, the key signs to look for are a heavy emphasis on **taking advantage of ("expropriation")** and **imitation**.

◆ *The person uses plans and programs developed by others, many times living in other contexts.* The poison of passivity strongly influences this person to take advantage of programs and plans already developed by others.

◆ *The person implements these plans and programs by focusing on imitating the appropriate behavioral patterns (actions and activities) associated with these plans and programs.* Since this person has jumped over the three steps involved in actually developing the program or plan, then they don't really understand what underlies these activities. Therefore, all that is left is for them to imitate (duplicate or replicate) these activities, hoping that by doing this the plan or program will somehow be a success.

◆ *The person lacks an adequate base for successfully implementing these programs and plans.* Since this person has jumped over the three steps

involved in actually developing the program or plan, then they don't really understand the program or plan, nor the base upon which it is built. They try to build it upon imitated activities, but this tends to be too shallow a foundation to support a full-blown plan or program.

◆ *The person feels a strong sense of stagnation and eventually apathy.* Since they tend to have difficulties with successfully implementing plans and programs, they feel stagnated because they are not getting anywhere (even though they are trying hard). Given time, this feeling of stagnation, coupled with frustration, can easily lead to apathy ("why even try, we can't do it").

Symptoms dealing with teaching and discipleship

The key signs to look for in this area are a heavy emphasis on **activity, imitation, and passivity.**

◆ *The person teaches the behavioral patterns and the bubble of others (the experts), instead of teaching and applying biblical truths and principles.* Under the influence of this poison, this person prefers to teach the behavioral patterns (actions and activities), the bubble (philosophy, lifestyle, etc.), and the study and conclusions of *others* (especially the experts), rather than encouraging their students to do the investigation, analysis, Bible study, and application themselves.

◆ *This person does not teach in an interdependent and innovative fashion.* Rather, they tend to be very dependent, traditional, and conservative.

◆ *This person prefers that their students receive instruction and information directly from them as teacher, instead of equipping these students to investigate, analyze, and apply the Bible themselves.* Again, this poison says that thinking is best left to the professionals (like the Sunday School class teacher), so instruction tends to be fairly one-way, from teacher to student. Equipping students to study on their own is viewed as very risky.

Symptoms dealing with maturity

In this area, the key signs to look for are a

heavy emphasis on **dependency, imitation, and loyalty.**

◆ *The person depends upon others for his or her growth and maturity.* Rather than exercising an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit, and seeking to interdependently develop their own growth and maturity, this person tends to depend upon others for this growth and maturity. In other words, they seek to "absorb" or "adopt" growth and maturity from the efforts and achievements of others.

◆ *This person is more of an imitator than an innovator.* They seek to imitate the actions, thoughts, and life of others, hoping through this imitation to achieve the transformation that these others have achieved through analysis, Bible study, and application. They are afraid of striking out on their own and personally doing this same analysis, Bible study, and application.

◆ *This person sees innovation as a dangerous activity.* They are afraid of striking out on their own. They are afraid of attempting to use the gifts and abilities that God has given them. Rather, they prefer the safety of imitation.

◆ *This person misses out on the growth that comes through developing and implementing their own programs and plans.* Since a person suffering from this poison tends to jump directly from need to implementation of a borrowed program, they skip the intermediate steps where true growth, maturity, and application of the Scriptures occur. In other words, this poison short circuits their growth and maturity.

◆ *This person confuses passive activity (fulfilling activities prescribed by others) with growth and maturity.* Since they depend so heavily on others, and since they also suffer from the poison of activism, this person tends to think that by doing a list of activities prescribed by some expert that they will magically "absorb" growth and maturity. Unfortunately, growth and maturity come through *transformation*, not mere activities.

◆ *This person is strongly loyal to their pastor, their church, and their church denomination.* Since they depend so heavily upon these entities as their professional leaders and experts, then they must be loyal to them. To do otherwise would be suicide, because they would be undercutting the very things they lean on.

14.

The biblical ingredients of an antidote for passivity

Once again, the “biblical ingredients” of an antidote for any of these three poisons are the Bible verses and biblical principles that, when taught to and applied by a person suffering from this poison, will alleviate the symptoms and effects of their poisoning. Since the type and degree of poisoning can be context specific, the antidote also can be adjusted to be context specific (by stressing those verses and principles that are most effective and applicable within the given context).

Please remember that the following list of Bible verses by no means is exhaustive, and that the reader is encouraged to add to it. However, this list does illustrate the process of mixing biblical ingredients to make a final antidote. To facilitate cross-referencing these ingredients to the appropriate impacts of the poison, the category descriptions have remained the same (for example, the antidote category “ingredients focusing on interpersonal relations” refers back to the section “impact on interpersonal relations” under the description of this poison).

General ingredients

Thinking that imitating means duplicating or replicating (mechanically copying) plans and programs, or reading and becoming informed about what others think. A person suffering from this poison tends to equate imitating with duplicating plans and programs or with duplicating knowledge and thinking by reading and becoming informed regarding what this other person thought. Regarding this, the Bible reminds us of the following.

◆ We are advised to imitate others who are worthy of such imitation (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Cor. 8:1–7; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 2:14; Heb. 6:12; 12:1–3). However, we must remember that, as we saw in the introduction to this work, the New Testament word for “imitate” carries an ethical focus, and refers not so much to duplicating a pattern of *behavior*, but rather to duplicating a transformed style of *life*.

◆ We also must remember *Who* it is that we are to imitate – the main object of our imitation is God (1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6).

Lacking an adequate base for the successful implementation of a program. Under the influence of this poison, the person many times lacks a truly adequate base for the successful implementation of a program or plan. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

◆ Jesus severely criticized the Pharisees for doing hollow activities that had no real substance undergirding them (Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47).

◆ A successful venture does require a firm base (Matt. 7:26–27; Luke 14:28–32).

Practicing a ritual and repetitive religion, rather than a dynamic and transforming one. A person under the effects of this poison tends to practice a religion that is more ritual and repetitive than dynamic and transforming. Regarding this, the Bible reminds us that a ritualistic and repetitive religion is neither pleasing to God nor adequate to transform our nature (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:6–10, 12–14; 2:17; 3:14–15; Matt. 6:7; 15:7–9; Mark 7:6–13 – please note that all of these verses refer to a population that was actively *doing* worship, but in a hollow, ritual way).

Ingredients focusing on interpersonal relations

Using and possibly abusing the contributions of others (experts, professionals, clergy, team members). A person affected by this poison tends to use and even abuse the contributions of others. Regarding this, the Bible reminds us that we *can* and *should* use others in our personal growth, but not in a way that short circuits that growth (Eph. 4:11–16).

Feeling a strong dependence on and loyalty to our professional leaders, being

neither innovative nor entrepreneurial, and expecting the same of those who serve under us. A person affected by this poison tends to behave this way. However, the Bible points out the following.

- ◆ We should place our trust in God and not in man (Ps. 91:2; Isa. 12:2; 26:4; 2 Cor. 1:9).
- ◆ Secondary loyalty to God-fearing leaders is fine, as long as it doesn't short circuit our growth (1 Tim. 4:13-16; 2 Tim. 2:2, 24). Please note the emphasis in these verses regarding teaching and the training of others who are able to teach yet others. Growth is not just to happen at the professional level. It is to be broad, across all the congregation.
- ◆ Although there are leaders within the church, we all form a body where all are equal and important and where all have something to teach to others and all have something to learn from others (Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16). This is called *interdependence*.

Ingredients focusing on teamwork and unity

Depending too much on others (especially the experts and team leader, but not necessarily the other team members), lacking in interdependent initiative with the other team members. A person suffering from this poison tends to depend too much on others, especially the experts and team leader, but not enough on the team members. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

- ◆ All are necessary and useful, and we should work in harmony and cooperation (Rom. 12:4-8).
- ◆ All in the body of Christ are important (1 Cor. 12:12-27).
- ◆ We should live in mutual submission and interdependence (Col. 3:15-22).
- ◆ Our sufficiency and the sufficiency of others all come from and depend upon God (2 Cor. 3:5-6; Phil. 4:13).

Using and possibly abusing the contributions of others (experts, professionals, clergy, team members). Under the influence of this poison a person tends to use and perhaps even abuse the contributions of others. Regarding this trait, the Bible says that we *can* and *should* use others in our own personal growth, but not in a way that ends up short circuiting that growth (Eph. 4:11-16).

Being more isolated from the team process than committed to it. A person suffering from this poison tends to leave the choosing of

commitments to the professionals, and not develop a high personal level of commitment to the team or to the process of being or becoming a team. Rather, they tend to remain somewhat isolated. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

- ◆ All are necessary and useful, and we should work in harmony and cooperation (Rom. 12:4-8).
- ◆ All in the body of Christ are important (1 Cor. 12:12-27).
- ◆ We should live in mutual submission and interdependence (Col. 3:15-22).

Ingredients focusing on leadership

Expecting that our followers depend on us, be faithful to us, and serve us. A leader affected by this poison tends to expect that their followers (those who serve under them) will behave as feudal vassals. The Bible says the following about this trait.

- ◆ We should place our trust in God and not in man (Ps. 91:2; Isa. 12:2; 26:4; 2 Cor. 1:9).
- ◆ Secondary loyalty to God-fearing leaders is fine, as long as it doesn't short circuit our growth (1 Tim. 4:13-16; 2 Tim. 2:2, 24).
- ◆ All are necessary and useful, and we should work in harmony and cooperation (Rom. 12:4-8).
- ◆ All in the body of Christ are important (1 Cor. 12:12-27).
- ◆ We should live in *mutual* submission and *interdependence* (Col. 3:15-22).

Ingredients focusing on planning and organization

Imitating activities that belong to imported programs, but without understanding the reality that underlies and gives meaning to these activities and programs. A person suffering from this poison tends to imitate activities, but without having an underlying understanding of what these activities mean and how they contribute to the program. Regarding this trait, the Bible shows that doing hollow activities with no true substance undergirding them is not pleasing to God (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:6-10, 12-14; 2:17; 3:14-15; Matt. 6:7; 15:7-9; 23:2-7, 14, 23-28, 33; Mark 7:6-13; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46-47).

Lacking an adequate base for the successful implementation of a program. Under the influence of this poison, the person many times lacks a truly adequate base for the successful implementation of a program or plan. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

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◆ A successful venture does require a firm base (Matt. 7:26–27; Luke 14:28–32).

Ingredients focusing on teaching and discipleship

Teaching the behavioral patterns and the bubble of others (the experts), instead of teaching and applying biblical truths and principles. A teacher suffering from this poison tends to teach the actions, activities, philosophy, and lifestyle of other human beings, rather than teaching and applying biblical truths and principles. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

◆ When we teach, we should not be teaching the mere precepts of men as if they were doctrine, invalidating the Word of God with our human-based instruction (Matt. 15:8–9; Mark 7:6–13; Titus 1:9; 2:1).

◆ We should teach the Scripture in its *entirety*, and not just the parts we like the best or the parts that fit best with our bubble (2 Tim. 3:16).

◆ We should live in the new man and leave the old bubble behind, along with all its teachings and “wisdom” (Rom. 8:12–17; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; Col. 3:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1).

◆ We are to be transformed into the image of Christ, and not the image of the class’s teacher or some other “expert” (Rom. 8:28–29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 3:17–19; 4:13).

Being afraid to think in an innovative and interdependent manner. A teacher or student suffering from this poison tends to be too dependent and too traditional. Regarding this, the Bible says the following.

◆ We all form a body where all are equal and important and where all have something to teach to others and all have something to learn from others (Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16).

◆ We all have the Holy Spirit guiding us to understand all truth (John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13).

◆ Our sufficiency and the sufficiency of others come from and depend upon God (2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13).

Preferring that our students get their instruction and information from us as teacher, rather than having the students investigate and study the Bible for themselves. Once again, a teacher under the influence of this poison will tend to be afraid of their stu-

dents exhibiting an innovative, interdependent, entrepreneurial spirit where they believe in exercising their God-given gifts and abilities. Regarding this, the Bible reminds us of the following.

◆ Paul was highly trained and very capable to study the Scriptures for himself (Acts 5:34; 22:3).

◆ It is very important that we choose leaders who can provide training to *others* so that they can study (2 Tim. 2:2, 15, 24).

◆ Certain individuals are given to the church so that the rest may be trained to do the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:11–16). Acts 6:3–4 is an example of where the apostles refused to be sidetracked by certain facets of the ministry, but rather turned those tasks over to *others* who were equipped for that task.

◆ We all have the Holy Spirit guiding us to understand all truth (John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13).

◆ Our sufficiency and the sufficiency of others come from and depend upon God (2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13).

Ingredients focusing on maturity

Depending upon others for growth and for the solutions to life’s problems, rather than attempting to solve these through an innovative and interdependent spirit. A person suffering from this poison tends to depend upon others rather than exercise his or her God-given gifts and abilities. The Bible says the following regarding this.

◆ We all form a body where all are equal and important and where all have something to teach to others and all have something to learn from others (Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16).

◆ We all have the Holy Spirit guiding us to understand all truth (John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13).

◆ Our sufficiency and the sufficiency of others come from and depend upon God (2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13).

Being more of an imitator than an innovator, seeing innovation as something dangerous. Under the influence of this poison, a person sees innovation as dangerous and tradition as safe. Therefore, they stick with the “tried and true” answers, even when the questions change. Regarding this, the Bible shows us the following.

◆ One of the Pharisee’s biggest complaints about Jesus was that He didn’t do things according to their *traditions* (Matt. 9:11, 14; 12:2; 15:2; Mark 2:16, 18; 2:24; 7:5; Luke 5:33; 6:2; 19:39).

◆ We all form a body where all are equal and important and where all have something to teach to others and all have something to learn from others (Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16).

◆ We all have the Holy Spirit guiding us to understand all truth (John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13).

◆ Our sufficiency and the sufficiency of others come from and depend upon God (2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13).

Confusing passivity (fulfilling activities prescribed by others) with growth and maturity. A person suffering from this poison tends to confuse passivity with growth and maturity. Regarding this trait, the Bible shows that doing hollow activities does not make us mature or pleasing to God (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:6–10, 12–14; 2:17; 3:14–15; Matt. 6:7; 15:7–9; 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–13; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47). This was one of the main problems of the Pharisees.

Being very loyal to our pastor, our church, and our church denomination. A person affected by this poison tends to be very loyal to those upon whom they depend. The Bible reminds us of the following, regarding this trait.

◆ We should place our trust in God and not in man (Ps. 91:2; Isa. 12:2; 26:4; 2 Cor. 1:9).

◆ Secondary loyalty to God-fearing leaders is fine, as long as it doesn't short circuit our growth (1 Tim. 4:13–16; 2 Tim. 2:2, 24). Please note the emphasis in these verses regarding teaching and the training of others who are able to teach yet others. Growth is not just to happen at the professional level. It is to be across all the congregation.

◆ Although there are leaders within the church, we all form a body where all are equal and important and where all have something to teach to others and all have something to learn from others (Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16). This is called *interdependence*.

Ingredients focusing on the unresolved problems of the bubble

Inferiority. A person suffering from this poison tends to think that they are not the proper

entity to design good plans and programs. They also tend to think that they are not the proper entity to analyze and judge proper patterns of behavior (actions and activities). Rather, they tend to think that all of this is best left in the hands of the trained professionals and experts. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

◆ We all form a body where all are equal and important and where all have something to teach to others and all have something to learn from others (Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16).

◆ We all have the Holy Spirit guiding us to understand all truth (John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13).

◆ Our sufficiency and the sufficiency of others come from and depend upon God (2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13).

◆ Our hope is to be in the Lord and not in ourselves (Ps. 39:7).

◆ Our hope is to come from God, and not from ourselves or from our skills and abilities (Ps. 62:5; 71:5).

◆ We are to live in the power of God and not in our own power (Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:5; 2 Cor. 6:7; Eph. 6:10).

Insecurity. Under the influence of this poison, a person tends to think that they are better off with the safe solutions (prepared by experts and in agreement with tried and true traditions) than with risky innovative and entrepreneurial thinking. Regarding this, the Bible has the following to say.

◆ We all form a body where all are *equal* and *important* and where *all* have something to teach to others and *all* have something to learn from others (Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16).

◆ We *all* have the Holy Spirit guiding us to understand all truth (John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13).

◆ Our sufficiency and the sufficiency of others come from and depend upon *God* and not upon ourselves (2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13).

◆ The One who began a good work in us will be faithful to continue this work to completion, with *nothing* at all lacking or missing (Phil. 1:6; Jude 1:24–25).

15.

The real world, the theoretical world, and emotions

As has been shown in the previous chapters, a person suffering from these three poisons, and especially from the poison of activism, tends to separate the real world from the theoretical world and their emotions, thinking that if the proper theoretical actions or activities are done (or if the proper emotions are felt, as we will see later), then their real-world behavior will somehow automatically come into alignment with their theoretical world (and their emotions). The Pharisees of the New Testament seem to have felt similarly. They felt that because they followed the Law in theory, even to the point of tithing their garden herbs, that their real-world behavior (which Jesus typified as “disregarding justice and the love of God”) would somehow automatically be acceptable to God (Luke 11:42).

In other words, a person under the influence of these three poisons tends to believe that *doing* leads to *being*. Therefore, by *doing* the proper activities, even in a theoretical way, they can *become* the desired final result. Again, this is very similar to the Pharisees who tithed even their garden herbs, and thus considered themselves “acceptable” to God (even when robbing the houses of the widows – Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47). However, the proper relationship between doing and being is not what these three poisons lead one to believe.

A biblical view of the relationship between doing and being

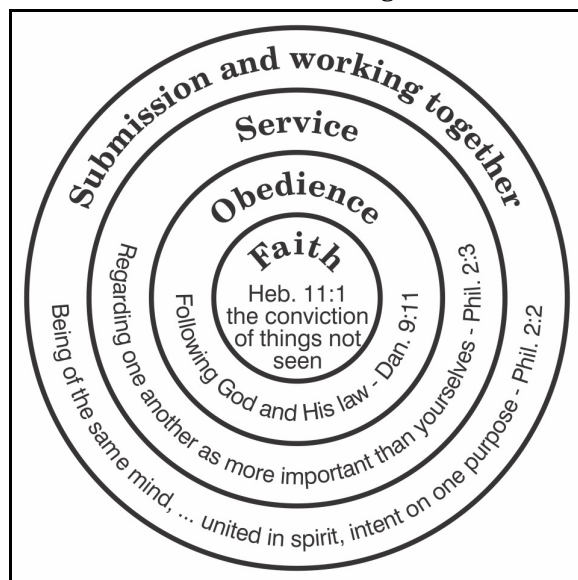
A graphical illustration. Since the effects of these poisons can be very deeply ingrained in a person, perhaps it will be of help to briefly examine a drawing that illustrates a more biblical view of the relationship between doing and being.

In the center of the drawing we have the word “faith.” Faith is like the kernel or core of our Christian character. Hebrews 11:6 says “and without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” So,

everything begins with this faith, and without it, it is impossible to please God or even approach Him. And what is faith? According to Hebrews 11:1, “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Therefore, *to have faith means to dare to believe in something that is still invisible, that is still not a part of our perceived reality (such as is the case with our future Christian character). But it also goes beyond daring to believe, because it involves having the assurance and conviction of things that we haven’t seen yet.* Thus, faith isn’t some ephemeral or nebulous *hope* that something will work out all right. Faith is a solid, firm, and durable *conviction*. And based upon this conviction of something that is yet invisible, we act because we have “the *assurance* of things hoped for.” In other words, it is not enough to simply *have* faith. We must *exercise* our faith. We must act on it.

Having and exercising faith leads to the second level of our drawing, which is “obedience.” Daniel 9:11 links this with following the law of God, not turning aside from Him, and not sinning against Him. So, *obedience means accepting the lordship of God and submitting ourselves to Him and to His Word.* Please note that achieving this level will be



difficult for anyone suffering from democratized feudalism, due to this poison's emphasis on affirming our individual lordship and our personal sovereignty as feudal lord. According to this poison, these are our *rights*.

Obedience leads to the third level of the drawing, which is "service." In the words of Philippians 2:3, we ought to "with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves." Therefore, *servicing means that we humbly accept the importance of others, especially in comparison with our own importance.* Once again, this will be difficult for someone suffering from these three poisons, because they tell us that we ought to exalt ourselves, and assert ourselves and our authority over others. That is getting ahead. That is being strong. These poisons tell us that those who consider others to be more important than themselves are weak. They are losers, and humility is the emotion associated with losers. See how far these poisons are from a point of view that is biblical?

And service leads to the fourth level of our drawing, which is "submission and working together." In the words of Philippians 2:2, this is "being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose." Therefore, *submission and working together mean accepting the plans of others as our own, and following these plans with persistence and determination.* This then is the final goal, working together in strong unity, accomplishing God's will for our lives. This is what we need in order to be able to accomplish the Great Commission. And this is what we need in order to be able to grow properly in maturity. But all of this will be difficult for someone suffering from these three poisons, and especially for someone suffering from democratized feudalism. In basic terms, this entire fourth level is *diametrically* opposed to the goals and desires of democratized feudalism.

Another passage, Ephesians 4:15–16, describes our final goal this way, "we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." Please note three elements in this passage that produce growth and maturity: the lordship of Christ (Christ is the head), the unity of the body (being fitted and held together by the contributions of every joint), and the importance and interdependence of each member (the proper working of each individual part, and the body's building itself up in love). These are the same three elements that typify the three outer levels of our drawing. Accepting the lordship of God typi-

fied the second level of obedience, accepting the importance of others typified the third level of service, and living in unity typified the fourth level of submission and working together.

Things work from the center outward.

Another important thing to note about this drawing is that everything begins in the center and then extends toward the outside. Everything begins with faith, and ends up with submission and working together. And each level undergirds and forms the foundation for the next level toward the outside. Thus, having and exercising faith undergirds and forms the foundation for obedience, which then undergirds and forms the foundation for service, which then undergirds and forms the foundation for submission and working together. *If one or more of the internal elements are missing, the external elements end up hanging in midair, with no adequate support.*

There are many, many believers across Latin America who will agree with the preceding paragraph. They will *intellectually* accept the truth of these statements. The problem is that the three poisons predispose them to *believe* differently. You see, belief is much more than mere intellectual assent. Belief is allowing your life to be radically and completely transformed by the truths that you intellectually accept. Therefore, you can intellectually accept one thing, and believe (and act) according to another.

An illustration. Mark 10:17–22 is a passage that illustrates this difference between doing and being, between *intellectual acceptance* of the truth and *life-changing belief*. These verses open by saying that "a man ran up to Him [Jesus] and knelt before Him, and asked Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'" Please note this man's emphasis on *doing*. Jesus answered, "You know the commandments, 'do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" Here, Jesus focuses on the intellectual acceptance that this man had of these truths. And the man responded, "I have kept all these things from my youth up." Again, note his emphasis on *doing*, on following the appropriate activities. Then Jesus said, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." With this, Jesus asked the man to show, *with his life*, the application of the truths that he knew. "But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property." The truths to which he assented intellectually had not really trans-

formed his life, in spite of the fact that he had “kept all these things” from his youth. Rather than leading to a transformation of life, “keeping” these commandments had allowed him to feign a certain religiosity, which then ended up *hiding* the fact that his life had remained untransformed.

Doing and being. Please note that in the drawing that we used earlier, the two internal regions (faith and obedience) have more to do with what we are (with our *being*), and the two external regions (service and submission and working together) have more to do with what we do (with our *doing*). Thus, we can modify the drawing as appears below. In this second drawing, it is important to note that being undergirds and forms the foundation for doing. In other words, if we attempt to *do*, without having adequately achieved the appropriate levels of *being*, it would be like trying to construct a building suspended in midair, without an adequate foundation or support. But, under the influence of these three poisons, this is exactly what happens many times. For example, training programs built under the influence of these poisons oftentimes suffer from this defect.

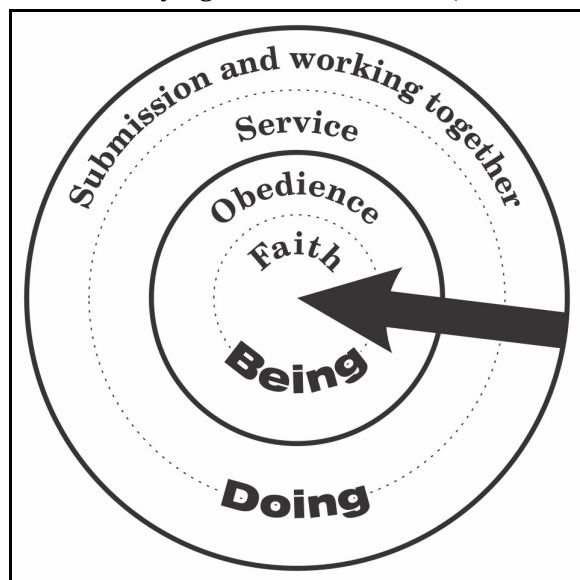
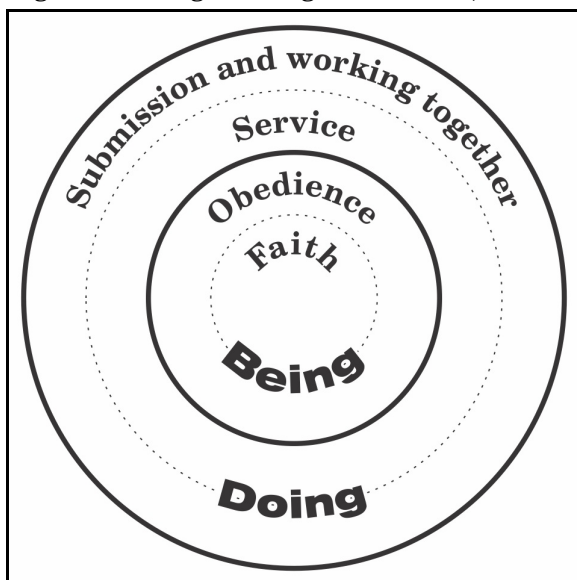
These poisons and their impact on training programs. Usually, training programs are context specific. This is good, in that it helps the programs to be pertinent and productive within that context (rather than being something foreign that has been imported). Unfortunately, this can also have its downside, if the context suffers from too high a level of these three poisons. For example, we have seen that these poisons tend to make a person believe that being flows from doing. Therefore, training programs built under the influence of these poisons run the risk of beginning the training focusing on *activities*, thinking

that the fulfillment of these activities will bring about a corresponding change in being and in character.

Therefore, equippers under the influence of these poisons may begin a training program by asking that the students fulfill activities that are typical of people who live in mutual submission and work together (such as cooperation, sharing and accepting other’s ideas, etc.). And why do they begin with these activities? Because they want to achieve the goal of living in *obedience* to the Word of God, which stresses a healthy body life and interdependence among believers. They also want to achieve the goal of exercising *faith* in God and in what He can do through others. In other words, under the influence of these poisons, they are exercising *doing* in order to *become*. Put another way, they are attacking the exterior regions of the drawing (see below), expecting that these activities will automatically somehow lead to achieving the interior levels of obedience and faith. By the way, something fairly similar happens many times in military settings. *Submission* and *service* are strictly enforced as an activity, in hopes that it will somehow bring about *obedience* and *trust* (similar to faith). Unfortunately, many times it only brings about grudging and temporary submission and service, with no true lasting transformation in the individual’s life and character.

As we have seen, a more biblical point of view says that submission and working together are *fruits* of service, which is a *fruit* of obedience, which is a *fruit* of having and exercising faith. In other words, instead of being the *cause* of faith and obedience, our actions are more the *result* of our faith and obedience.

But these three poisons tend to make an equipper approach the task of training in *reverse* order (thus trying to teach backwards, as we have



already noted). They ask for transformed behavior, without having developed a transformed character (or being) first. Or they ask for transformed behavior, thinking that this is the proper way to achieve the transformed character. Whichever the case, a training program designed under these poisons tends to leave the center area of our drawing empty, and thus the activities tend to lack any firm foundation.

Wouldn't it be better to design a training program to work from the center of the drawing outward? For example, rather than having students start by doing activities typical of those who live in submission and work together, we could begin their training by concentrating on having and exercising faith. Here, the students would learn to believe in and act upon something that is still invisible, that is not yet a *concrete* part of their reality. The next step in their learning would be obedience. In this step, and upon the base of their faith, the students would learn to accept the lordship of God and to follow Him and His Word. Then the next step in their learning would be service. In this step, and upon the base of their faith and obedience, the students would learn to consider others as more important than themselves, and serve them. And *then* would come the step where the students learn to live in submission and to work together. In this fourth step, the students would already have established the base of faith, obedience, and a servant spirit. And upon this base, they would learn to be of the same mind, maintain the same love, be united in spirit, and be intent on one purpose (to use the wording of Philippians 2:2). We end up with the same actions with which the other program was trying to start, but we now have a transformed *being* underlying and undergirding these actions, which gives us a far more stable foundation for permanent changes in behavior.

The real and the theoretical worlds

Now let's modify our drawing a little. The level of *being* now represents a level where our beliefs and behavior are based upon true convictions that have impacted and transformed our very being, our very life, our very character. That is what makes them belong to this level of being. Thus, this is a *real* level of belief and behavior. This is a level where transformation *really* has occurred, based upon *real* convictions and *real* beliefs, and all of this has resulted in generating *real* behavior (behavior with a solid, underlying foundation).

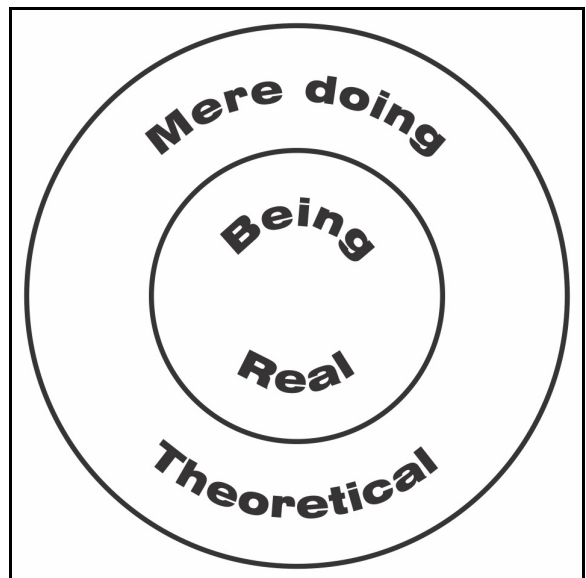
At the same time, the level of *mere doing* (activities as isolated and separated from the level

of being – in other words, without any true undergirding from the level of being) now represents a level where beliefs and behavior are based more upon mere intellectual assent that has not really impacted or transformed our being or our character. Thus, this is a *theoretical* level of belief and behavior. This is a level where changes have only occurred *theoretically*, so the beliefs and behavior rooted solely in this level are only *theoretical* beliefs and behavior.

Living in the real and theoretical worlds.

Any person can live *simultaneously* in both the real level and the theoretical level. In fact, it is rather common, *especially for those suffering from these three poisons*. And when it happens, it can result in beliefs and behavior that appear quite contradictory because they are based in two very different levels of this new drawing. This apparently contradictory behavior, then, can be very confusing to a person who is not affected in the same way by these three poisons, because they do not really understand the difference in these two bases nor the difference in the two sets of beliefs and behavior.

Take, for example, the case of an international team leader who is suffering from these three poisons. As we have seen in the sections that describe the effects of these poisons, this team leader probably will promote the development of an annual plan for this team, and ask that the team members turn in monthly reports describing how their activities during the previous month have contributed toward achieving the goals of this annual plan. This leader does this because they understand *theoretically* that this behavior (making plans and requesting monthly reports) is "necessary" according to something that they read or heard somewhere. But, they do not *really* un-



derstand why or how a system involving planning and monthly evaluations actually works. They simply adopted (or personally “imported”) the system and are now duplicating the corresponding behavior. In other words, none of this has really broken into the *real* level for them, so it just stays at the theoretical level. So, they perform this behavior in a theoretical fashion (they make their plans and request that people turn in monthly reports). And since they are supervised by a mission agency that probably does understand and expect the use of plans and monthly evaluations, it is very important for this team leader to keep up this theoretical behavior since their position as leader depends in part upon it.

But what happens in this leader’s (and the team’s) *real* world may be very different. Again, as we have seen in the sections that describe the effects of these poisons, this individual pretty much does whatever they happen to think is best at the moment. So in effect, they take the annual plan, file it away, and never look at it again during the year, even though it was developed theoretically to guide them throughout the entire year. Furthermore, they don’t really expect to receive any monthly reports, in spite of having requested them theoretically. And if any reports are turned in, they don’t *really* know what to do with them. Plans and monthly evaluations tend to only have a theoretical significance for them.

Now, let’s turn our attention to the other members of this international team, most of whom probably suffer to a lesser degree from these three poisons. These team members probably tend to be pretty confused about what is going on. Their team leader doesn’t seem to pay any attention to the team plan, and furthermore, they get little or no constructive interaction regarding their monthly reports. It is almost like they are living on two planes, one theoretical (where all the “right” things are being done) and one real (where what is really done is quite different and very fluid, perhaps even fluctuating from day to day). And in truth, *this is exactly what is happening*. Their team leader, and hence the team as well, is living on two different planes. This can quickly lead to uncertainty, frustration, stagnation, apathy, and perhaps even open rebellion on the part of these other team members. And the more reluctance and challenge that this team leader feels from these team members, the more entrenched he or she will tend to become, stressing their sovereignty and autonomy as leader. Under proper conditions, this team situation could rapidly spiral out of control.

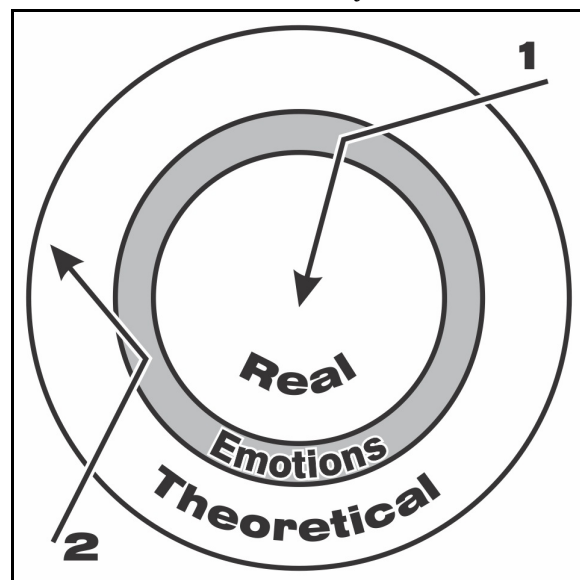
Once again, all three of these poisons contribute to living and functioning simultaneously on

both the theoretical and real planes. Passivity influences a person to borrow programs, concepts, and philosophies without really understanding them, thus “locking” them away in the theoretical plane. Activism influences a person to pay more attention to actions than to being, thus focusing attention on the action-oriented theoretical plane. And democratized feudalism influences a person to act as a sovereign and *autonomous* lord, thus allowing them to divorce their real actions from their theoretical plane.

The role and impact of emotions

We have one more item to add to this drawing: emotions. Emotions are kind of located somewhere between the theoretical and real planes, and one of their basic functions is to provide additional energy to help an element (such as a biblical truth) cross the threshold from the theoretical level into the real level. It is not easy for an element to cross this threshold because a lot of energy is oftentimes required for it to reach the point where it actually *transforms* our very nature and being (and thus enters fully into the *real* level). Although the Holy Spirit provides the principal motive force behind this transformation, He oftentimes also uses emotions to help provide some of this energy.

For example, many of the potential transformations that come our way start out as theoretical information. Frequently, they are rooted in one or more Bible passages that we have read. As we dwell and meditate upon these Bible passages, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we begin to flesh out some of the ways that the application of these passages may end up transforming our very nature and being. Up until this point, most of this activity has been at the *theoretical* level. No actual transformation has occurred yet.



But now the Holy Spirit takes these Bible passages, along with all their implications for our life, and begins to make them percolate and permeate up into the *real* level of our diagram. This is where these truths actually begin to transform who and what we really are. And the role of emotions is to help provide the necessary energy to bring this theoretical truth up to the level of real truth. Once again, it is not easy to achieve this transformation, and it requires large amounts of energy. Our emotions can help provide the “push” that will convince us to actually go ahead and allow the Holy Spirit to make the change.

In our drawing, all of this is represented by the arrow labeled with the number one. It takes an element (such as biblical information) entering the theoretical level and it helps focus and transport this element into the real level, where it ends up transforming our reality and our very being. This is true transformation, assisted by a proper and healthy use of emotions.

However, these three poisons tend to interfere with the proper functioning of emotions, making them work in a very *different* way. As we have seen, passivity and activity both place their focus on the theoretical plane. And democratized feudalism resists any penetration of the “sacred” real realm (thus conserving sovereignty and autonomy at this crucial level). The end result is that poisoned emotions, rather than transporting theoretic-

cal truths *into* the real level, tend rather to *bounce* them back out into the theoretical level (as illustrated by the arrow labeled with the number two). In other words, and as we have seen in our analysis of the effects of these three poisons, a person suffering from them will tend to blame themselves, feel regret, and do all sorts of penance (emotional response) due to inadequacies in the real level of their life, but this emotional discharge, rather than focusing its energy on penetrating and transforming this individual at the real level, dissipates this energy in a host of activities done basically at the theoretical (and thus “harmless”) level. The person feels better, due to the emotional discharge and the activities accomplished, but their reality (including the very inadequacies which led to this emotional discharge) basically has remained unchanged. This is a false or feigned transformation, assisted by an improper and unhealthy use of emotions.

Thus it is possible, as was the case in one of my classes, for a student to stand up before the entire class, place their hand upon their heart, vow before God to be more faithful in their attendance ... and then never come to class again. The emotional discharge of confessing their lack of attendance, and the promise of doing additional activities (such as attending the class faithfully) made them *feel* better, but the underlying problem certainly was not resolved.

16.

Building a detox program: preliminary thoughts

Since the problem that this text has examined is one of being poisoned by three very strong, lethal, insidious, and elusive poisons, then the solution will revolve around building a detox program that will help offset the effects of these three poisons.

The correct foundation for a detox program

As was seen in the “Overview” portion of chapter six, the correct foundation for this detox program is threefold. *First*, we must have accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord. We must belong to Christ (Gal. 5:24), having been purchased by His blood (1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:18–19). Without this, there is no basis for the achieving the next two parts. *Second*, we must crucify the flesh (Gal. 5:24) through our death and resurrection in Christ (Col. 2:20–3:3) and through the living daily sacrifice of our carnal minds and bodies (Rom. 12:1–2). This resurrection makes us a new creation, capable of living free from the effects of these poisons (2 Cor. 5:17). And *third*, we must live in Christ (Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:6). In other words, we are to put on the sphere of Christ and live daily within this realm.

The correct approach for a detox program

The basic goal. As has been mentioned above, the basic goal of this detox program will be to help offset the effects of these three poisons. It also will be to help shut down their production, at least in areas over which the Latin American church can exercise some degree of control (initially in their congregations, and later in a broader degree in society).

Speak the truth in love. Ephesians 4:15 admonishes us to speak the truth in love. It would be very easy (and even carnally rewarding) to design a detox program that would take an af-

ected individual and then beat them over the head with a bunch of Bible verses and finger pointing. For example, those administering the program, by definition, should be individuals who have been at least partially freed from the effects of these poisons. In other words, they should have already gone through some sort of basic detox program. However, having been freed from the poison’s effects, these people could end up forgetting what it was like to suffer from these poisons, how ingrained they can become, and how difficult it can be to live without their effects. And this “medical staff” can then become calloused and perhaps even abusive in their administration of the program (“hey, I made it through this detox program without much difficulty, what’s your problem?”). Both the program and the “medical staff” need to speak the truth in love.

But the program and the “medical staff” also must speak the truth. For this reason, Bible verses will be the *core* of the program. Only the truth of the Word of God is capable of correcting and transforming our lives (Ps. 119:9; 2 Tim. 3:16).

Therefore, the detox program must speak the *truth*, and do it in *love*. Otherwise, the affected “patient” can end up discontinuing the program because they feel that it is not being biblically administered ... *and they could be right*. Should this ever become the case, then the program has killed itself.

Allow the Holy Spirit to apply God’s Word. It is not the task of the medical staff administering this detox program to convince the patients of their sin and need for a change. That is the task of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7–8). Of course, the Holy Spirit may work *through* the medical staff in this process, but they must remember their place in the total process. It’s like a doctor. Normally, a doctor doesn’t really *heal* a patient. Rather, he or she helps facilitate things so that the patient’s body can heal itself. The medical staff in this detox program has a similar role. It is the *Holy Spirit* that will free the patient from the

effects of these poisons, and it will be the *Holy Spirit* that will shut down the production of these poisons. Hopefully, the medical staff will be instruments in His hands, but the instrument should not assume too much responsibility or credit for itself. The success of the work always depends upon God (Phil. 1:6; Jude 1:24–25).

Achieve the necessary liberties early on.

These three poisons are based upon a system or worldview that denies people three key liberties: spiritual liberty, relational liberty, and ministerial liberty. If we are to nullify the effects of these poisons, we will need to establish these three liberties early on in the detox program. In fact, you could say that these three liberties form three columns that support the detox program. We'll see more about these three liberties and their roles in the next chapter.

Establish a vital spiritual life. Upon the foundation established by these three liberties, the patient must be encouraged to establish a vital personal spiritual life. This will include emphasis on personal study and application of the Scriptures, as well as emphasis on *being* rather than on simply *doing*. And this vital spiritual life also will provide a very important check on any possible abuse of the three liberties mentioned above. In other words, this spiritual life is an important *moderator* of the patient's application of their newfound liberties.

Establish a safe detox environment.

Living without these three poisons, and especially removing the bubble and substituting the sphere of Christ can be seen as very intimidating and dangerous by a person under the influence of these poisons. And it is very risky business. The rest of the poisoned populace will devour alive any newly detoxified individual, *if they are not protected*. Of course, once they are accustomed to living within the sphere of Christ and to using the full armor of God, they will be able to protect themselves. It is in the interim time, as they learn to live in the sphere of Christ and wear the armor of God, that they will need some additional protection. Thus, the need to set up a safe detox environment. This will be studied much more in depth in the next chapter.

Helpful factors in developing and executing a detox program

The support of key individuals, materials, and events.⁴⁸ By definition, this detox program is something that is innovative and stresses

interdependence. Therefore, anyone suffering from these three poisons will tend to view it as something suspicious and perhaps even dangerous. Therefore, it will be a big help to the program if *key individuals within the churches* give their support to this process. These may be lay leaders, pastors, denominational leaders, and/or seminary and Bible institute professors. Please note that these individuals do not necessarily need to become part of the medical staff required by this program, they just need to give their official support. Also, it will be a big help if *books and materials* can be prepared that will help explain this detox program and “walk” the patients through the process. These materials will vary from simplified manuals that the patient will use up to complex medical reference works that the medical staff will use. And lastly, it will be a big help if *conferences and workshops* can be offered to explain and promote the program.

A group of key individuals that have gone through the detox program. As has been mentioned, the medical staff required by the program should be people that have been at least partially freed from the effects of these poisons by going through a detox program themselves. Therefore, the first batch of people to go through the program ought to be selected carefully, with an eye toward future medical staff that will have the gifts, skills, and abilities necessary to successfully carry out the program. They will then staff the program upon being successfully detoxified, and will then begin to generate future medical staff for program expansion.

The ability to analyze the degree and type of poisoning. To properly place a patient in the detox program, we need to know the degree and type of poisoning from which they are suffering. Then they can be placed in the proper detox support group. One of the basic ways of analyzing this is by examining the type and degree of symptoms that the patient exhibits, and then comparing them to the lists of symptoms and poisons contained in this text. Eventually, standardized tests could even be developed to quickly and accurately gauge degree and type of poisoning.

The selection of key groups with which to begin. Obviously, it will be easiest to start with those who feel some degree of poisoning or feel that they are suffering from some kind of problem that needs to be corrected. Those who are not sick tend not to seek out a doctor. Also, it will be easiest to start with those who show some sort of innovative or entrepreneurial spirit, because they

will be the most open to risking the detox program. Fortunately, these two groups probably overlap quite a bit. It is the innovative and entrepreneurial that will tend to feel the poisoning first. The more traditional will feel it much later.

Having said this, it should also be noted that, since much church leadership tends to be conservative and traditional in nature, these leaders probably will not be among the first patients. The program should have their official support, as was mentioned earlier, but they may very well hold off for a while before actually going through the program. Also, due to the nature of their position within the church, it very well might be a good idea to form a special detox group for church leaders. Otherwise, they may find it hard to open up in their detox group, and their presence might also prove overpowering for the “common” member of the congregation. The detox groups must be areas where people feel free, and the residual feudalism of their poisoning may limit who may be combined in the same group.

The construction of a safe, healthy detox environment. As has been mentioned, living without these three poisons, and especially remov-

ing the bubble and substituting the sphere of Christ can be seen as very intimidating and dangerous by a person under the influence of these poisons. Therefore, they will need a safe, healthy detox environment where they can accomplish these tasks as well as practice their newfound liberties and interact freely with other members of their detox support group.

The application of a biblical antidote. Key Bible verses offering corrections for these three poisons and their symptoms will form the core of the detox program. Basically, these Bible verses will become the antidote that will nullify the effects of these three poisons. In other words, by *studying, believing, internalizing, and applying* these Bible verses, a person will be freed from their poisoning. And what verses should be used? The list of key verses will vary from context to context. The important thing is that these verses really *speak* to the issue of correcting the poisoning. The verses listed in chapters 6, 10, and 14 of this work should serve as an ample illustration of this process, as well as providing a “jump start” to the compilation of possible Bible verses for an antidote.

17.

Building a detox program: basic steps

There are nine basic steps involved in the construction of a well-rounded detox program. These steps will need to be flexed and adapted to the particular context, but much of the internal structure will remain the same.

1. Develop and package an antidote

One of the first things that needs to be done in the construction of a detox program is to develop and package an antidote. Without this, the program will have nothing to offer. This antidote is a *basic program of instruction and application of appropriate biblical truths and principles that provides the necessary correction for these three poisons and their effects*. As has been noted, chapters 6, 10, and 14 of this work provide an ample illustration of this process, as well as helping “jump start” the compilation of Bible verses to be used in this antidote.

What are some of the characteristics of a good antidote? *First*, it should be geared to rapidly counteract the degree and type of poisoning involved (in other words, it should be highly effective). *Second*, it should be relatively pleasant to take (avoiding any unnecessary bitter “taste” or adverse reactions). *Third*, it should be fairly easy to reproduce and distribute (thus making it widely available). *Fourth*, it should be relatively easy to adapt on-site to the precise degree and type of poisoning involved in this context. And *fifth*, it should be relatively easy to administer (requiring minimal preparation, support facilities, and training of on-site medical staff).

2. Train the necessary medical personnel

These are the people who will supervise and administer the treatment of those who enter this detox program (the patients). As such, they need to be fairly free from the effects of these poisons. It is not necessary that they be completely free of

effects, just free enough so that any residual effects will not hinder the proper administration of the program and its treatment. In all likelihood, this means that these individuals have already gone through a detox program somewhat similar to this one.

If there is a need to urgently acquire medical staff, they may be borrowed from another location, or the church can start with those of their congregation that have only been minimally affected by these poisons. Each context will contain a certain number of people who have been naturally resistant to these poisons. If they are willing and able, this group of people will probably be the easiest and fastest to train. Thus, it also makes them logical candidates to “test run” a newly-developed detox program.

However, there is a potential downside to using those who exhibit some sort of natural resistance to these poisons. Due to not suffering so much from their effects, they may be looked upon by the rest of the congregation as the *least* able to do anything to help. They will not be among the strong feudal leaders that all the rest look up to. They will seem “lethargic” to the rest, because they don’t suffer so much from activism. And they probably will tend to be more innovators than traditionalists (since the poisons promote traditionalism). Therefore, they may be viewed with a certain degree of suspicion as potentially risky people. Nonetheless, they do form a group that can provide quickly-trained medical staff. Their use will need to be weighed according to the needs and risks in the particular context.

Specialists. Heading the list of medical personnel, we have the specialists. These are individuals with special training or abilities in treating certain facets of these poisons. Basically, they probably will work mostly with the cases of severe poisoning or particularly resistant strains of poisoning. They also can supervise, help, and advise the medical staff who happens to have less training, and they can serve a resource function.

Of all the medical personnel, this group will be the smallest, because only a reduced number of this type of worker is required. And due to the severity of their cases, they probably will see their patients weekly or twice a week, for more protracted periods of time, and in a more structured “hospital” environment (as will be explained under step three).

Doctors. The second type of medical personnel needed are doctors. These are individuals with a general training in treating all the facets of these poisons. Basically, they probably will work mostly with the cases of moderate to severe poisoning. They can receive help, advice, and supervision from the specialists, and they can supervise, help, and advise medical staff with less training.

A moderate number of this type of personnel will be needed, as they will be treating more patients than the specialists will. And due to the type of their cases, this group probably will see their patients once a week or once every two weeks, for a moderate amount of time, and usually in a less structured “ambulatory” environment (as will be explained under step three).

Nurses and assistants. The third type of medical personnel needed are nurses and assistants. These are individuals with a basic training in treating all the facets of these poisons. Basically, they probably will work mostly with the cases of mild to moderate poisoning, and offer assistance in the cases of more severe poisoning. They can receive help, advice, and supervision from the specialists, doctors, and any nurses and assistants who happen to have more training.

Of all the groups, the program will require the greatest number of this type of personnel, as they probably will be treating the largest number of patients. And due to the type of their cases, they probably will see their patients somewhere between once a week and once a month, for a moderate amount of time, and usually in a more flexible simple environment (as will be explained soon).

3. Construct a safe and healthy detox environment

Purpose and composition of this environment. This will be the environment in which the necessary treatment is provided to the patients. For maximum effectiveness, this environment probably will be that of a small group of 10 to 15 people that share similar degrees and types of poisoning, and that can offer mutual support to each other. The similarity of degrees and types of poisoning means that the antidote can be “tai-

lored” to the precise needs of this group, increasing its effectiveness and speed. This similarity also should provide a common base among the group’s members, thus allowing them to better understand each other’s circumstances and situation, identify and empathize more with each other, and thus offer stronger mutual support.

Basic goals of this environment. The first goal of this environment is to *establish a set of broad liberties built upon the underlying equality within the body of Christ*. Examples of this equality include: the universal priesthood of believers (Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5–9; Rev. 1:5–6); the universal baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13); the universal gifting of all believers (Rom. 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 12:4, 11, 15–30; 1 Pet. 4:10); the emphasis on body life, mutual submission, and broad participation in the ministry (Mark 9:35; Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 12:7, 12–30; 16:15; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2, 11–12, 25; 5:21; Phil. 2:3–7; Col. 3:13, 16; 4:17; 1 Thess. 4:9; 5:11–15; Heb. 3:13; 10:24; James 5:16; 1 Pet. 4:8–10; 1 John 3:11; 2 John 1:5); and the direct emphasis upon equality within the body (Rom. 8:16–17; 1 Cor. 3:7; Gal. 3:28; 5:6; 6:15; Eph. 3:6).

In short, there are three basic liberties that need to be established in this environment. These are *spiritual* liberty, *relational* liberty, and *ministerial* liberty (each of which will be developed more fully in following chapters). These liberties provide the freedom necessary to offset the poison of democratized feudalism by establishing a biblical *equality* among the body of Christ. They also provide the freedom and foundation for a vital and vibrant spiritual life, which in turn helps offset the poisons of activism (doing hollow rituals) and passivity (looking to others to do it for us).

The second goal of this environment is to *establish a vital, vibrant spiritual life*. This involves *personal* study of the Bible and true *application* of the Scriptures. In other words, it involves an emphasis on *being* rather than on *doing* (although doing will continue to be important). Therefore, this part of the environment will include elements of basic Bible doctrine, basic spiritual maturity, basic Bible study methods, how to properly use Bible helps, etc. The resulting spiritual life will serve to guide and moderate the exercise of the patient’s newfound liberties (Gal. 5:13), thus avoiding abusive excesses. And it also will provide the basis for an even greater exercise of these liberties. In other words, a healthy spiritual life strengthens these liberties, and these liberties strengthen a healthy spiritual life.

The third goal of this environment is to *establish an increasing exercise of these liberties and*

spiritual life. As the patient's abilities grow, so the proper exercise of their liberties also increases. The whole process starts out small, but it grows quickly. In this goal, the individual participates actively in their own nurturing and growth, which includes participation in the different ministries of the church. Therefore, this part of the environment will include some basic equipping in essential ministry skills, along with the formation of groups within the congregation to help accomplish these ministries.

And the fourth goal of this environment is to *establish a safe environment where transformations can be made with minimal risk*. Shedding the bubble and donning the sphere of Christ is risky until a person is accustomed to using the full armor of God. This environment will provide the freedom and protection necessary for this process.

Basic components of this environment.

As may be anticipated, this environment will contain three basic components. It will contain a *spiritual* component, which will be that portion of the environment that assures the free use and growth of the patient's spiritual liberty. It will contain a *relational* component, which will be that portion of the environment that assures the free use and growth of the patient's relational (or interpersonal) liberty. And it will contain a *ministerial* component, which will be that portion of the environment that assures the free use and growth of the patient's ministerial liberty. Each of these components will be developed more fully in following chapters, but it is good to note here that these three, plus their corresponding liberties, must be developed *simultaneously* because they each depend upon and feed into the other. In other words, the amount of liberty in one area depends upon the degree of liberty in the other areas. They grow together, and they diminish together.

Basic levels of this environment. Within the general detox environment, there are three levels of therapeutic sub-environments. The first is a *simple environment* for those with a mild case of poisoning. Here, in a therapeutic context that will afford the maximum flexibility and require the minimum amount of external supportive elements, the patient will receive the attention and supervision of one or two nurses and/or assistants trained to help in the cases of mild poisoning. This simple environment probably will be formed around a support group with which the patient meets anywhere between once a week and once a month for a moderate amount of time.

The second sub-environment is an "*ambulatory*" environment for those with a moderate case

of poisoning. Here, in a more structured therapeutic context that will afford a limited amount of flexibility, the patient will receive the attention and supervision of one to three persons trained to treat cases of moderate poisoning (mostly doctors assisted by nurses and/or assistants). This "ambulatory" environment probably will be formed around a support group with which the patient meets once a week or once every two weeks for a moderate amount of time each meeting.

The third sub-environment is a "*hospital*" environment for those with a severe case of poisoning. Here, in a much more structured therapeutic context, offering a number of additional external support elements and affording a much smaller degree of flexibility, the patient will receive the attention and supervision of a team of personnel (consisting of specialists, doctors, nurses, and assistants) that are specially trained to treat cases of severe poisoning. This "hospital" environment probably will be formed around a support group with which the patient meets weekly or even twice a week for a more extended amount of time, and which also will include occasional concentrated times of treatment (such as therapeutic retreats).

The use of an analgesic. Since both the poisoning and the treatment process can at times include elements that are painful or uncomfortable, it is important that the detox environment also include some kind of an analgesic factor to help reduce this level of pain and discomfort. This analgesic factor may be supplied through any number of ways. For example, story telling and presenting case studies are both very good for presenting uncomfortable truths in an insulated, "other person" fashion. Drama and role playing are another set of useful analgesics, as they allow the uncomfortable truths to be presented closer to home than with story telling and case studies, but still insulated through being acted out in a "fictitious" way. Group outings involving sports or other outside activities give the opportunity to use up some excess energy and release some steam. And group fun nights and movies give the opportunity to shift the focus off of the treatment process, while still allowing for the transmission of important information (if the proper games and movies are selected). This list could go on and on, with each context providing its own unique version of context-sensitive pain relief.

4. Gauge the degree and type of poisoning involved

The fourth step in the process of constructing a well-rounded detox program is to gauge the

degree and type of poisoning involved. This may be accomplished by comparing the patient's behavior with the list of symptoms given for these three poisons (see chapters 5, 9, and 13). The strength of the symptoms will help indicate degree of poisoning, and the grouping of the symptoms should help identify which poisons are involved. Of course, with time a standardized test can be developed, similar to temperament analysis tests and personality inventories, but this is a rather slow process requiring repeated testing and validity verification across a wide spectrum of contexts in Latin America. In the meantime, a simple comparison and analysis against the lists in this text (plus any additional context-specific elements that have been added) ought to serve as a general indicator of degree and type of poisoning.

And how are the results to be used? Patients may be grouped by degree and type of poisoning, so that their therapeutic support groups generally contain individuals with similar poisonings. Thus, the medical staff working with this group may focus the group's treatment process to specifically work with this unique set of symptoms and effects, thus speeding up the entire process by weeding out superfluous treatment activities. For example, if patients suffering from a very strong democratized feudalism, a moderate activism, and a very weak passivity were all grouped together, then the medical staff could concentrate especially on attacking the democratized feudalism, while also treating to a lesser degree the activism. And passivity could be nullified with just a few treatments.

5. Apply the necessary components of the antidote

It is in this fifth step that the antidote prepared in step one is adapted or adjusted to the particular context, degree, and type of poisoning suffered by the patient, and then it is applied. As mentioned earlier, this antidote is a program of Bible study, discussion, and application geared to correcting the specific elements of the patient's poisoning. Thus, this step will account for the majority of the time that a patient will spend in the detox program. Here they will discuss their Bible study and possible applications, and work toward making the proper applications in a proper way that will correct the effects of their poisoning.

By grouping the patients in therapeutic support groups by degree and type of poisoning (accomplished in step four), we automatically have study groups who share a high degree of commonality among their members (assuming that the group's members all come from a similar general overall context). Thus, only one basic adaptation

of the antidote should be necessary for each group.

As was seen in step three, these groups will form a safe and healthy detox environment that promotes not only the application of the antidote, but also the establishment of the liberties and spiritual life that underlie and undergird this application. And as seen in step two, these groups will meet periodically, as determined by the degree and type of poisoning of their members. Those with more severe poisoning probably will meet weekly or perhaps even more frequently, for more protracted periods of time, and in a more structured "hospital" environment. Those with moderate poisoning probably will meet weekly or once every two weeks, for a moderate amount of time, and usually in a less structured "ambulatory" environment. And those with a more mild poisoning probably will meet somewhere between once a week and once a month, for a moderate amount of time, and usually in a more flexible simple environment. Also, during these group meetings the medical staff will monitor each patient's progress, and they will make any necessary adjustments to the treatment or the treatment process.

WARNING: It is *extremely* important that the medical staff recognize and understand the role that these three liberties (spiritual, relational, and ministerial) and a vibrant spiritual life play in the application of the antidote. *In short, these liberties and this spiritual life allow the antidote to be effective.* The antidote itself is an important ingredient of the detoxification program, but as with any medicine, it can be applied properly or improperly. If it is applied improperly, this antidote could end up being as damaging as the poison itself (or perhaps even more so). These three liberties and a vibrant spiritual life are the elements that assure a proper application of the antidote. And as such, they are every bit as important, and perhaps even more important, than the antidote per se. For example, these three poisons predispose a person not to be *truly* transformed, but rather only to *appear* to be changed because they now *do* the correct actions or activities. They think that doing leads to being. Therefore, the natural tendency of a poisoned member of one of these detox groups will be to simply *perform* the activities of the detox program, thinking that they will thus automatically *become* detoxified. *This is an incorrect and dangerous use of the antidote.* The antidote is Biblical information that should be applied to the life of the individual suffering from poisoning. But their own poisoning will lead this individual to believe that by merely studying and memorizing these truths, he or she will automatically be cured. It doesn't work this way. *Acquiring information is not equivalent to wisdom or maturity.* Wisdom and

maturity flow from a correct application of acquired information. Without acquiring this information, there is nothing to apply. But the mere acquisition of this information is *not* equivalent to its application. Therefore, one of the main functions of these three liberties and a vibrant spiritual life is to generate a context that will facilitate and promote the *application* of the information acquired through the detox program (thus leading to true transformation). And this function is so important that each of these liberties will be given its own chapter in this study. The establishment and exercise of these liberties will lead to a healthy and vibrant spiritual life, which will lead to a healthy and effective application of the antidote.

WARNING: It is *extremely* important that the medical staff be able to properly diagnose the progress made by each patient. When they analyze this progress, this staff must look for true transformations (as versus a simple facade of having “changed”). *Only a true transformation signals a healthy, proper, and effective application of the antidote.* Therefore, until there is evidence of a true, genuine transformation, the medical staff cannot diagnose true progress in this patient’s case, regardless of the amount of Biblical information that the patient can recite. Once again, it is *critical* that the medical staff pay attention in their analysis of the patient’s progress, because these poisons look to create a short circuit that can completely *nullify* this detox program.

6. Regulate the treatment according to the patient’s progress

After confirming the basic application of the necessary components of the antidote (that is to say, after giving the patient a thorough dose of the adapted antidote, and confirming a positive response on the patient’s part through his or her application of this antidote and the corresponding transformations that accompany a successful application), the medical staff probably will begin to reduce the dose of this antidote, since it has achieved its goal. During this time, any “high points” that may require some additional attention or reinforcing will be covered by repeating the appropriate parts of the antidote, reinforced with additional Bible passages and/or examples. This also will be the time when the support group meetings will begin to taper off.

7. Transition the patient into the role of helping others

As their support group meetings begin to taper off, the patients will need to be involved in some

other form of productive therapeutic activity. Thus, the medical staff begins the patient’s transition into the role of helping others. There are a number of avenues open for accomplishing this, and the patient’s degree of commitment and interest, as well as their gifts and abilities, will help determine which avenue is the right one for them. For example, patients can help others simply through sharing their testimony of how the detox program worked for them. They can also help others through informally sharing the ingredients of the antidote and the process of its application. This would not constitute an actual support group situation, but rather be an information session that could result in forming a new support group. And patients can help others through actually joining the medical staff. It is expected that a significant portion of the patients will desire to go through a bit of additional training and then join the medical staff. This will provide the additional staff necessary for the expansion and extension of the detox program.

8. Prior to releasing the patient, consider vaccinating them

When the patient is released from their support group, they will be returning to a hostile, toxic secular environment. Depending on the context of their congregation, they may also be returning to a hostile, toxic religious environment too. They must be able to resist the effects of these three poisons in these environments. Thus, shortly prior to release it would be wise to consider the advisability of vaccinating them with a very brief, summary version of the antidote. For example, the entire antidote could be presented in capsule form in just one or two support group meetings, or in a special retreat held to celebrate a group of patients that are “graduating” from the detox program.

9. Consider the advisability of vaccinating the congregation

Though by no means equivalent to a full application of the antidote, it might be wise to offer a periodic, very simplified detox program to the congregation as a whole as a sort of general vaccine against the major effects of these three poisons. This could be done as part of a spiritual retreat, it could be a regular part of the church’s initial discipleship program for new believers, or it could take some other form. The idea is to keep the poisoning and its effects down to a minimum, even among those who have not yet gone through the full detox program. A simplified program like this would allow for testing the degree and type of

poisoning of the congregation, it would raise their consciousness of these poisons and their effects, it would serve as advertisement for the full-blown detox program, and it would provide a logical point at which to transfer interested affected individuals to an appropriate support group and begin their full detox program.

Additional observations

Before closing this chapter on the basic steps of building a detox program, there is a handful of additional observations that should be made concerning this process.

The danger of a partial application of the detox program. Given the complexity of the detox program, the effects of the poison of passivity, and a certain tendency among Latin American churches to focus especially on the spiritual area, there is a real danger that these churches will only understand and apply a *portion* of the detox program. These three poisons work against all three of the liberties that underlie this program, and the church, in general terms, only is accustomed to achieving one of the three liberties (the spiritual liberty), and that only partially. Therefore, there is a big temptation for the church to “import” the program (due to suffering from passivity) without truly understanding the need for or nature of the liberties that underlie and undergird the program. When this happens, the church focuses almost all its attention on announcing certain theoretical components of spiritual liberty, unfortunately many times without achieving a true and broad understanding and application of this liberty, and then seeks to implement the support groups based solely upon this liberty. As has been seen, all three liberties (spiritual, relational, and ministerial) must grow together. You cannot emphasize one without a corresponding emphasis on the other two. Any one implies the other two. Therefore, you also cannot de-emphasize two without a corresponding de-emphasis in the remaining liberty. A healthy, therapeutic support group and a well-rounded, effective detox program require all three.

The pain involved in the process. Abandoning the effects of these three poisons, and especially removing the protective “bubble,” is painful and dangerous. Yes, these poisons *are* killing our churches, but it is a *comfortable* way to die. Many times, sorrow, pain, and discomfort are actually important and unavoidable ingredients in bringing about the necessary transformation in a person’s nature (2 Cor. 7:8–10). Change brings pain. But correct change also brings growth and

happiness. Thus, there will be pain involved in the detox program and support groups. It is unavoidable. However, it should be limited to its *productive* forms, and reduced or ameliorated by the appropriate analgesic factors, as seen earlier.

The consistency, firmness, and depth required. Given the fact that the patient will encounter pain in the detox program, it is important that both the patient and the medical staff be steadfastly, firmly, and deeply committed to this process. This is no superficial, easy, or theoretical transformation that we’re dealing with here. We’re not talking of simply changing behavioral patterns. We’re talking of a *radical* transformation, in the *real* level of a person’s life, affecting his or her actual *being*. In other words, we’re talking about character transformation, we’re talking about transforming an entire lifestyle, we’re talking about changing the person’s very heart. This takes commitment, and lots of it.

The possibility of contagion. Since the patient, many times, has lived with these poisons all their life, the old poisoned lifestyle is comfortable and familiar. Therefore, it also will be attractive and tempting to this patient. As such, the medical staff will have to watch out for the possibility of contagion (where the patient drops back into their old ways of living and coping). Although it is impossible to totally isolate the patient from their surrounding toxic environment, there are things that can be done to minimize that environment’s impact. For example, the time spent in the support groups can be increased and/or maximized (better utilized). Also, contact with highly-infected leaders can be minimized, at least until these leaders themselves are treated. And the patient can be vaccinated against the most noxious elements when contact is unavoidable. Many times, contagion is preventable, if the medical staff is careful and creative. And contagion always is surmountable, so it is not a catastrophic element.

The speed of the process. Each patient will respond differently to the detox program, and will tend to advance through the program at different rates. As much as is feasible, support groups should be held together to preserve the mutual ties that have been established and undergird the group’s support. However, if one patient seems to be far outstripping the group, and seems to be suffering because they are being held back with the others, or if the others seem to be suffering from comparing themselves to an exceptionally responsive patient, then that patient might need to be transferred to another support group. Any

such transfer should be considered very carefully beforehand, and then, if decided to be beneficial, it should be accomplished with care, so that neither group is jeopardized by this patient's departure or arrival, nor is this patient jeopardized by having to sever and form new friendships. Again, a large degree of the benefit of the support groups is the support that they offer, which is based upon the ties that have been formed. These should not be broken except under extenuating circumstances.

It also should be noted that *generally* progress through the detox program will tend to be rather slow. These kinds of transformations do not normally come quickly. Therefore, both patient and medical staff should be prepared to dedicate the time necessary for the transformations, and they should be prepared psychologically for a rather lengthy process. On the upside, fruit from this process generally will tend to be visible early on, thus encouraging both patients and medical staff.

The importance of having faith. As was seen in one of the drawings earlier in this text, everything begins with faith. Both the patient and the medical staff must have faith in God and in what He can do in and through them. Without this faith, the detox process and program basically will be impossible.

The possible danger of going to the other extreme. After living so many years under the effects of activism, there is a certain danger that the patient may go to the other extreme when freed from activism's influence, replacing the intense activity of activism with lethargy and apathy ("if God has accepted me just as I am, then why exert myself?"). A correct teaching on the place of works in a Christian's life will help correct this. We do not *do* things to *become* what we want to be. But because we *are* what we are, we *do* good works (Eph. 2:10).

18.

Building a detox environment: the spiritual component

The detox environment has three principal components: a spiritual component, a relational component, and a ministerial component. In this chapter, we will look at the spiritual component.

Basic description

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the spiritual component of the detox environment is *the portion of that environment that promotes and assures the free use and growth of the patient's spiritual liberty*. In other words, it is the portion that allows the patient the freedom to become all that God wants him or her to be.

Rather than being a concrete, visible part of the detox environment, like a Bible or one of the members of the medical staff, this element is more of a *mindset* that grants each patient the freedom and responsibility to actually and fully apply the biblical truths and principles about who and what they are in Jesus Christ. This mindset is the result of having and exercising faith in what God has said about this individual. And under the influence of this mindset, the patient exercises faith in what God can do through him or her, and exercises his or her spiritual gifts in mutual submission and for the benefit of the whole body of Christ.

And, as has been noted above, this spiritual component needs to be constructed simultaneously with the other two components. They build upon and feed into each other, and if one suffers, they all suffer.

Built upon spiritual liberty

This spiritual component is built upon the instruction, understanding, and application of the biblical truths and principles that form the foundation of spiritual liberty. As such, these truths will need to be taught, understood, and applied early on in the process of forming the support groups. They are foundational to the entire program. These truths include the following elements (and please note that this list is not exhaustive,

and may be added to and adapted according to the needs of the context).

All are equal before God. All believers stand on equal footing before God (Rom. 8:16–17; 1 Cor. 3:7; Gal. 3:28; 5:6; 6:15; Eph. 3:6). While it is true that some have been chosen in a special way and given gifts and positions so that they may equip others for the ministry (Eph. 4:11–12), this does not negate the underlying equality within the body of Christ, nor the responsibility of all members to accomplish that ministry. Rather, it actually highlights this, since the smaller group has been chosen to equip (not lord it over nor be a substitute for) the saints (the *total* group) in order that the saints (the *total* group) may do the work of the ministry.

As believers, we have only one Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and only one flock (John 10:16; Acts 20:28; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4). Of course, there are under shepherds, but the focus with under shepherds isn't so much on *leading* the others but rather on facilitating the ministry of others through sacrificial *servicing*, *equipping*, and *guiding* of them (Matt. 20:25–28; Mark 10:42–45; Luke 22:25–27; Acts 20:28–31; 2 Cor. 1:24; 1 Pet. 5:2–3).

All have the Holy Spirit. Each believer has been baptized by the Holy Spirit and has the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13).

All can study the Bible and discover biblical truths. This is not some activity reserved only for the professional, trained clergy, but rather all believers have the Holy Spirit, therefore all are capable of studying and understanding God's Word (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16–17).

All can correctly apply the biblical truths. Once again, this is not some activity reserved only for the professional, trained clergy, but rather all believers are to read, understand, and

apply God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16–17). Furthermore, since they also have the Holy Spirit (as shown above), then each individual believer is the person that is *best* suited to make this application because they are the closest to this reality, they understand it best, they can monitor the application best, and they are best positioned to adjust the application as necessary.

All are to be actively studying the Bible and making applications. This is the conclusion of the previous points. All believers can study, understand, and apply the Bible, and they also are responsible for doing it (Acts 17:10–11; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16–17).

The effects of exercising spiritual liberty

And what are the effects of exercising spiritual liberty within (and beyond) the context of these therapeutic support groups? There are a number of positive effects, including the following.

◆ The patient develops confidence in what God can do through him or her. Thus they begin to assume their place and responsibility in the body

of Christ and in the ministry.

◆ The patient develops a strong commitment to know God's Word and follow His will. If they are to assume their place and responsibility in the body, then they must know what God has planned for them to do. We all have gifts and abilities, but God is the General that commands and coordinates this army.

◆ As a consequence of the previous point, the patient now acts in a more ethical fashion than a pragmatic fashion. Rather than seeking success via the fastest route, now they seek to do what is right by God's standards.

◆ Therefore, the patient also leads a life that is less fluctuating and more focused. Having the external structure of God's planning and God's Word provides structure, meaning, and focus for the patient's life.

◆ And the patient permanently treats their feelings of spiritual inferiority and insecurity. Since we all have been forgiven and are equal before God, they realize that there is no real base for their feelings of inferiority. And since we are all accepted and live in mutual submission in the body of Christ, they realize that there is no real base for their feelings of insecurity.

19.

Building a detox environment: the relational component

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the detox environment has three chief components: a spiritual component, a relational component, and a ministerial component. In this chapter, we will look at the relational component.

Basic description

The relational component of the detox environment is *the portion of that environment that promotes and assures the free use and growth of the patient's relational (or interpersonal) liberty*. In other words, it is the portion that allows the patient the freedom to live as a complete and valued member of the healthy, united, interdependent body of Christ.

Once again, rather than being a concrete, visible part of the detox environment, such as the fellow members of the support group or this manual, this relational element is more of a *mindset* that grants each patient the freedom and responsibility to actually and fully apply the biblical truths and principles about who and what they are in the body of Christ. This mindset is the result of having and exercising faith in what God has said about this individual: that they are an *important, equal, and indispensable* member of the body, with *unique, important, and necessary* gifts. And this is true no matter what their gifts are, no matter what their abilities are, and no matter what position they may fill.

Under the influence of this mindset, both the patient and those around him or her (for example, the members of their support group) exercise faith in what God can do through this patient, thus granting him or her the full liberty necessary to employ their spiritual gifts for the benefit of the ministry and of the body. They also live in mutual submission as members of the body, seeking to serve one another, considering others to be of greater importance than themselves.

And, as has already been noted, this relational component needs to be constructed simultaneously with the other two components. They build upon

and feed into each other, and if one suffers, they all suffer.

Built upon relational liberty

This relational component is built upon the instruction, understanding, and application of the biblical truths and principles that form the foundation of relational liberty. As such, these truths will need to be taught, understood, and applied early on in the process of forming the support groups. They are foundational to the entire program. These truths include the following elements, but this list is by no means exhaustive and may be added to and adapted according to the needs of the context.

All have equal social status in the body of Christ. All believers stand on equal footing in the body (Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; 5:25–26). Of course, there are differing gifts and roles, but these do not divide or prioritize the body (Rom. 12:4–5; 1 Cor. 12:11–12, 20, 25).

All are united into only one body of Christ. There is only one body, and we are all united into that body (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 3:6; 4:4–6).

All are needed for their unique gifting. We are all necessary members of the body (Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12:4, 7–11, 15–30). No one is secondary, or unimportant, or unnecessary. God Himself has appointed the gifts as He determined (1 Cor. 12:6, 11, 18), so the assignment is perfect. And the gifts are given for ministry and not for establishing priorities within the body (Rom. 12:3, 6–8; 1 Cor. 12:7, 21).

All are important to the body and vital to its functioning. Since the gifts are unique and necessary for the ministry, then all believers are important and vital for the body (Rom. 12:3–21; 1 Cor. 12:7, 12–30).

All are to live and minister in mutual submission and interdependence. Since all are important and vital to the body and to the ministry, then all should live in mutual submission and interdependence (Mark 9:35; Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 12:25; Eph. 4:2, 25; 5:21; Phil. 2:3–7; Col. 3:13, 16; 1 Thess. 4:9; 5:11–15; Heb. 3:13; 10:24; James 5:16; 1 Pet. 4:8–11; 1 John 3:11; 2 John 1:5).

The effects of exercising relational liberty

And what are the effects of exercising relational liberty within (and beyond) the context of these therapeutic support groups? There are a number of positive effects, including the following.

- ◆ The patient develops mature interpersonal relationships. There is trust, honesty, openness, and love between people.
- ◆ The patient develops deep interpersonal relationships. Based upon this trust, honesty, openness, and love, these individuals can now form deep interpersonal relationships that will weather the ups and downs of Christian life and ministry.
- ◆ The patient reaches social maturity, where he or she is free to minister in an interdependent form, as the true body of Christ. *Childish* social

relationships are built upon what a person may receive from others (Luke 7:31–32). *Mature* social relationships are built upon what a person may give to others, without overlooking their own needs (Phil. 2:3–4). It is only in mature social relationships that people are free to live in a truly interdependent way, both giving and receiving in a healthy fashion.

◆ The patient finds examples worthy of imitation. We all need examples to follow and imitate (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9; Heb. 11:4–12:3). These examples must come from the ranks of mature believers, including the area of mature interpersonal relationships.

◆ And the patient permanently treats their feelings of social inferiority, social insecurity, and individualism. Since we are all equal in the body and live in mutual submission, they realize that there is no real base for their feelings of social inferiority. Since we are all important, vital, and necessary for the body and for ministry, they realize that there is no real base for their feelings of social insecurity. And since all are important, vital, and necessary, and since all are to live in mutual submission and interdependence, they realize that there is no real base for an overzealous expression of their individualism.

20.

Building a detox environment: the ministerial component

Once again, the detox environment has three principal components: a spiritual component, a relational component, and a ministerial component. In this chapter, we will look at the ministerial component.

Basic description

The ministerial component of the detox environment is *the portion of that environment that promotes and assures the free use and growth of the patient's ministerial liberty*. In other words, it is the portion that allows the patient the freedom to serve and to minister within the body of Christ.

Again, rather than being a concrete, visible part of the detox environment, this ministerial element is more of a *mindset* that grants each patient the freedom and responsibility to believe and fully apply the biblical truths and principles about who are as a priest, along with all the rights and responsibilities inherent in being a New Testament priest. As we have seen in the other two components, this mindset is the result of having and exercising faith in what God has said about this individual: that they have been given an important, unique, and necessary role and spiritual gifts to be exercised for the benefit of the ministry and for the benefit of the body.

Under the influence of this mindset, both the patient and those around him or her (for example, the members of their support group) exercise faith in what God can do through this patient, thus granting him or her the full liberty necessary to become properly involved in ministry. Thus, they exercise their spiritual gifts in an environment of mutual submission and interdependence, where each believer is recognized as being important for the ministry, and their personal contributions are valued and properly employed.

And as has been noted with the other two components, this ministerial component needs to be constructed simultaneously with the other two, because they build upon and feed into each other. Therefore, if one suffers, they all suffer.

Built upon ministerial liberty

This ministerial component is built upon the instruction, understanding, and application of the biblical truths and principles that form the foundation of ministerial liberty. As such, these truths will need to be taught, understood, and applied early on in the process of forming the support groups. They are foundational to the entire program. These truths include the following elements (again, this list is not exhaustive and may be added to and adapted according to the needs to the context).

All are priests. All believers are priests (Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5–9; Rev. 1:5–6; 5:9–10). As such, we all have a ministerial function to fulfill, regardless of our *official* station in the local church.

All have the Holy Spirit. As was seen under the spiritual component, all believers have been baptized by the Holy Spirit and have the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13). Therefore, we all have the power (Acts 1:8) and the guidance (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13) necessary to properly and adequately fulfill our ministerial roles.

All are gifted and their gifts need to be used. We have all received gifts that need to be employed in the ministry (Rom. 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 12:4, 7–11, 15–30; 1 Pet. 4:10–11). No one is superfluous or unnecessary. God Himself has appointed the gifts as He determined (1 Cor. 12:6, 11, 18), and the assignment is perfect and adequate for the task.

All are to be involved in the ministry. All believers are to be involved in the ministry (1 Cor. 12:7, 12–30; 16:15; Eph. 4:11–12; Col. 4:17; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:5–8; 1 Pet. 4:10–11). This is not some activity to be reserved only for the profes-

sionally trained clergy.

All are important for the church and for the ministry. Since all are gifted, since all are needed, and since all are to be involved, then all believers are important for the church and for the ministry (1 Cor. 12:7; 12–30). Consequently, if we are not employing all of them in this ministry, then we are attempting to fulfill the ministry without using all of the tools that God has seen fit to give us.

The effects of exercising ministerial liberty

And what are the effects of exercising ministerial liberty within (and beyond) the context of these therapeutic support groups? There are a number of positive effects, including the following.

◆ The patient and those around him or her develop faith and a positive attitude regarding what God can do in and through them.

◆ The patient and those around them reach ministerial maturity, where they truly believe and act upon the fact that we all are priests, with equal access to God's Word, the Holy Spirit, and

God Himself.

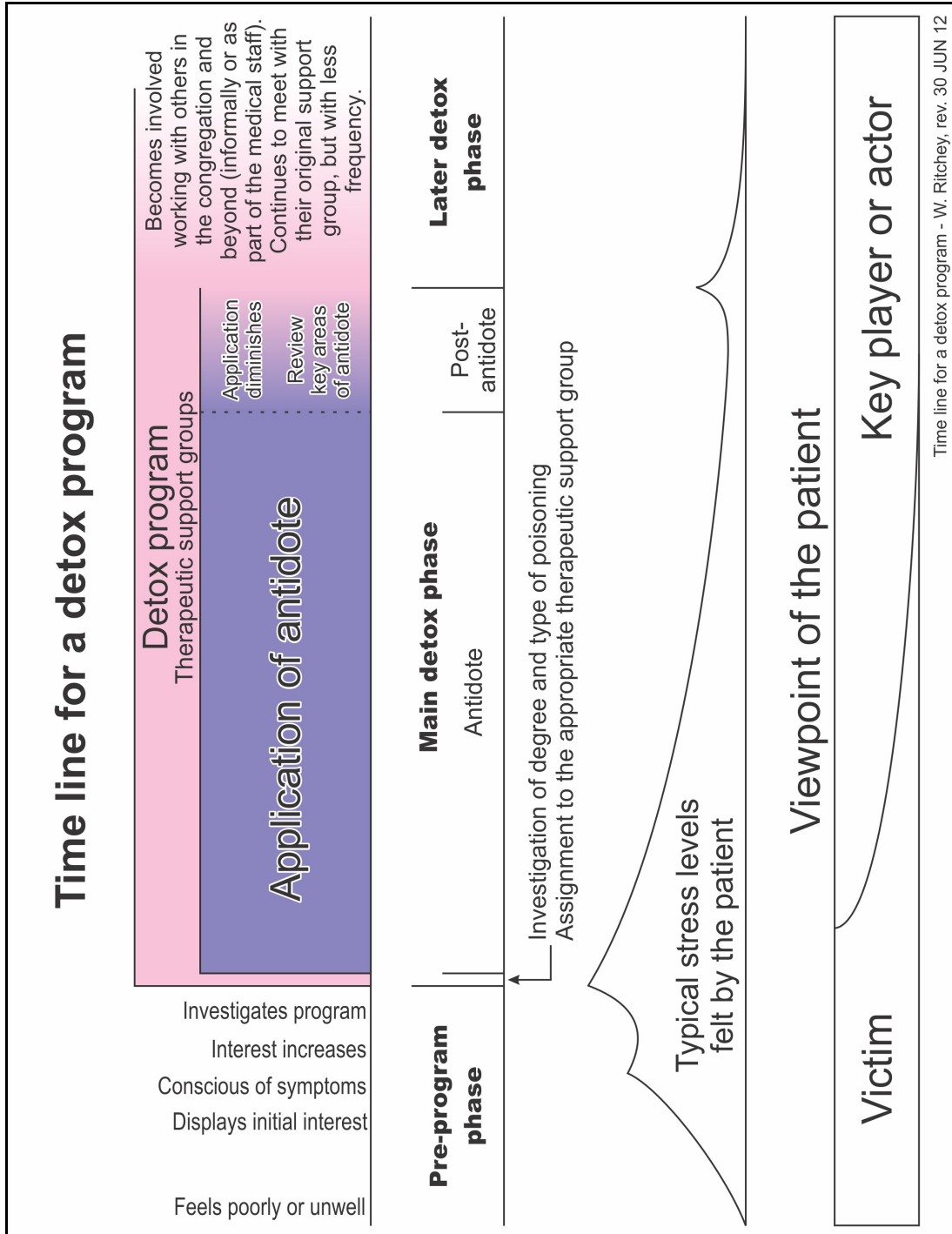
◆ The patient and those around them reach ministerial maturity, where they truly believe in their gifts, in their abilities, and in what God can do in and through them.

◆ The patient and those around them reach ministerial maturity, where they exercise their faith and minister in freedom, in mutual submission, and in interdependence (depending upon others and what God can do in and through them).

◆ And the patient permanently treats his or her feelings of ministerial inferiority, ministerial insecurity, and individualism. Since we are all priests and have been divinely gifted for our functions, they realize that there is no real base for their feelings of ministerial inferiority. Since we are all important, vital, and necessary for the ministry (in other words, we all have a uniquely important and necessary contribution to make to the ministry effort), they realize that there is no real base for their feelings of ministerial insecurity. And since we are all important, vital, and necessary for the ministry, and since we all are to minister in mutual submission and interdependence, they realize that there is no real base for an overzealous expression of their individualism.

Appendix 1

Diagram of a sample basic detox program



Appendix 2

Sample detox lessons

The following are two sample detox lessons designed to apply the antidote to the areas assigned for that particular week of classes. The patients should come to their support group meeting having completed the lesson's activities, and the group will then discuss what they each have learned from their studies. Thus, the meeting will encourage interdependence, since each member will have something to share and each member will have something to learn. Also, the group will discuss how they can best go about applying this portion of the antidote to their lives (in other words, the changes that they should make).

Please note that each lesson follows the same basic three-point structure: **1)** a section of examination and analysis, where the patient examines and analyzes the content of the handouts and the possible poisoning of their own life and of the lives of others in their context; **2)** a section of biblical reflection, where the patient identifies and explains the biblical position regarding the typical impact of these toxins (based upon topics, questions, and suggested Bible passages that guide the patient in their Bible study); and **3)** a section of application (based upon four questions that guide the patient to analyze how to take the biblical evidence that they have studied and better apply it to their own case of poisoning, both personal and contextual, and also consider how to share this information with others).

Sample of a lesson for week 4 – the impact of these toxins on the sense of inferiority, insecurity, and individualism

Examination and analysis

Read and study the handout for this week. Now, examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context, including yourself, are affected by a sense of inferiority, insecurity, and individualism. Also include a description of six brief examples that illustrate how people are affected (two examples for each one of these three elements of inferiority, insecurity, and individualism).

Biblical reflection

Inferiority. As the handout explains, a person suffering from these toxins tends to exhibit a strong sense of inferiority. What does the Bible have to say about these feelings of inferiority? Briefly answer the following questions, based upon the assigned Bible passage or passages (and any other Bible passages that you may wish to include that treat the topic – if you include other passages, please mention their references).

1. As believers, are we the same as we were before we accepted Christ as our Savior? – 2 Cor. 5:17
2. As believers, are our sins forgiven? Are we just and holy? Do we all have the same Holy Spirit to guide us and give us power? – John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 3:24; 5:1; 8:14; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:11, 13; Col. 2:13–14; 1 John 2:12
3. As believers, does our personal level of power and ability really matter that much? – Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:4–5; 2 Cor. 4:7; 6:7; Eph. 6:10; 2 Tim. 1:7
4. As believers, should we base our hope in our abilities and power, or in another source? – Ps. 39:7; 62:5; 71:5; Rom. 15:4
5. As believers, where does our sufficiency and the sufficiency of others come from? – 2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13
6. Are some members of the body of Christ inferior to others? – Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16

Insecurity. The handout also shows that a person suffering from these toxins tends to exhibit a strong sense of insecurity. What does the Bible have to say about these feelings of insecurity? Briefly answer the following questions, based upon the assigned Bible passage or passages (and any other Bible passages that you may wish to include that treat the topic – if you include other passages, please mention their references).

1. As believers, upon what or whom does the completion of our transformation depend? – Phil. 1:6; Jude 1:24–25
2. As believers, upon what or whom does our sufficiency and the sufficiency of others depend? – 2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13
3. Do all believers have the same Holy Spirit guiding us in understanding and applying biblical truths and principles? – John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13
4. What do we have to fear? Can we have true peace? – Rom. 8:31–35; John 14:27; Col. 3:15
5. Are some members of the body of Christ less necessary or more expendable than others? – Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16

Individualism. As the handout shows, a person suffering from these toxins tends to exhibit a strong sense of individualism. What does the Bible have to say about these feelings of individualism? Briefly answer the following questions, based upon the assigned Bible passage or passages (and any other Bible passages that you may wish to include that treat the topic – if you include other passages, please mention their references).

1. To whom do we belong and whose life should we live? – 1 Cor. 6:19–20; Gal. 2:20
2. How should we live in relation to others? – Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; 12:12–27; Gal. 5:13–14; 6:2; Eph. 4:1–6, 16, 31–32; Col. 3:12–17
3. Whose desires should govern our actions? – Col. 3:17

Application

Based upon the information seen above (in the handout and in your Bible reflection), examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in your own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this study. Answer the following questions as a guide to your thinking.

1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from their feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and individualism.

Sample of a lesson for week 11 **the impact of these toxins on teaching and discipleship**

Examination and analysis

Read and study the handout for this week. Now, examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context (including yourself) are affected by poisoning in the area of teaching and discipleship. Also include a description of five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning.

Biblical reflection

Viewing the growth of others as a threat. A person suffering from democratized feudalism tends to see the growth of others as a threat. What does the Bible have to say about this? Briefly answer the following questions, based upon the assigned Bible passage or passages (and any other Bible passages that you may wish to include that treat the topic – if you include other passages, please mention their references).

1. Should we expect equipping and growth in the church? What should be its place? – 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:2, 24
2. Who should be learning and who should be teaching? – Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:11; Gal. 5:26; Phil. 2:3–4; James 4:6–7; 1 Pet. 5:5–6
3. How should we treat the growth of others? – Rom. 14:19; 15:1–2; Eph. 4:11–16

Teaching our bubble rather than biblical content. A person suffering from democratized feudalism tends to teach their bubble more than biblical content. What does the Bible have to say about this? Briefly answer the following questions, based upon the assigned Bible passage or passages (and any other Bible passages that you may wish to include that treat the topic – if you include other passages, please mention their references).

1. What should we teach? What should we not teach? – 2 Tim. 3:16; Matt. 15:8–9; Mark 7:6–13; Titus 1:9; 2:1
2. What should we do with the “old man,” our old “bubble?” – Rom. 8:12–17; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; Col. 3:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1
3. Into whose image should we be transformed? That of our teacher? – Rom. 8:28–29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 3:17–19; 4:13

Emphasizing accomplishing activities rather than transforming lives, and announcing truths rather than applying them. A person suffering from democratized feudalism tends to put more emphasis on *doing* activities than on transforming lives, and on *announcing* truths than on applying them. What does the Bible have to say about this? Briefly answer the following questions, based upon the assigned Bible passage or passages (and any other Bible passages that you may wish to include that treat the topic – if you include other passages, please mention their references).

1. Do intellectual assent and/or outward observances *necessarily* equate with true application and radical transformation? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28; Mark 7:6–8; 10:17–22; 2 Tim. 3:5
2. Is it possible to do the activities and theoretically believe the right things without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
3. Where does true character transformation come from? – Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28; Rom. 12:1–2

Confusing doing activities with being a good teacher or student, and confusing activity (or an emotion felt) with having understood and applied the truth taught. A person suffering from activism tends to confuse *doing* activities with *being* a good teacher or student. They also tend to confuse *activities* (or emotions felt) with the *understanding and application* of the truth taught. What does the Bible have to say about this? The verses that we just studied above are also applicable here. Therefore, briefly answer the following questions, based upon these Bible passages (and any other Bible

passages that you may wish to include that treat the topic – if you include other passages, please mention their references).

1. Do intellectual assent and/or outward observances *necessarily* equate with true application and radical transformation? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; Mark 10:17–22; 2 Tim. 3:5
2. Is it possible to do the activities (or feel the emotions) without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
3. Where does true character transformation come from? – Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28; Rom. 12:1–2

Declaring growth and maturity based on a list of completed activities or on some emotions felt, rather than on transformed lives. A person suffering from activism tends to declare growth and maturity based only on a list of completed activities or on some emotions felt, rather than basing their declaration on concrete evidence of a genuinely transformed life. What does the Bible have to say about this? Once again, the same key verses that we have seen in the previous two sections are also applicable here. Therefore, briefly answer the following questions, based upon these Bible passages (and any other Bible passages that you may wish to include that treat the topic – if you include other passages, please mention their references).

1. Do intellectual assent and/or outward observances *necessarily* equate with true application and radical transformation? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; Mark 10:17–22; 2 Tim. 3:5
2. Is it possible to do the activities or feel the emotions without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
3. Where does true character transformation come from? – Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28; Rom. 12:1–2

Application

Based upon the information seen above (in the handout and in your Bible reflection), examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in your own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this study. Answer the following questions as a guide to your thinking.

1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.

Appendix 3

Suggested class schedule for a detox program

General format: weekly meetings of two hours for 16 or 17 weeks

- I. **WEEK 1** – large group meeting (all together in one group)
- A. Pedagogical summary
 1. General topic: the basic problem of our poisoning
 2. Key skills to be developed: detection and evaluation of their own degree of poisoning
 3. Instructional objectives (the focus of the informative presentation and of the discussion in this meeting)
 - a. Introduce and discuss the topic of our poisoning and the general evidence that points to this poisoning (the consequences or typical problems created by living a poisoned lifestyle)
 - b. Introduce and discuss the typical symptoms of poisoning
 4. Learning objectives (the focus of the discussion in this meeting, the homework, and the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Identify and illustrate the most typical symptoms and consequences of poisoning (according to the patient's particular context)
 - b. Have each patient examine and evaluate their own type and degree of poisoning
 - c. Have each patient calculate the importance of going through a detoxification program
 - B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)
 1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
 2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet
 - C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting
 1. Start with an informative presentation – introduce and discuss the basic problem of our poisoning and its symptoms, paying special attention to the instructional objectives (approximate portion of the meeting: 1 hour 40 minutes)
 2. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 20 minutes)
 - a. Read the introduction to the principal symptoms of poisoning and to the basic detox program (contained in the informational handout)
 - b. Analyze your own life and the lives of your friends to identify ten typical symptoms or consequences of poisoning, jot them down on a piece of paper, and bring them to the next meeting
 - c. Examine and evaluate your own type and degree of poisoning
 - d. Examine and calculate the importance of going through a detoxification program
- II. **WEEK 2** – large group meeting (all together in one group)
- A. Pedagogical summary
 1. General topic: the root of the problem (the three toxins)
 2. Key skills to be developed: identification and analysis of the three toxins and the “bubble”
 3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): describe the three toxins and the “bubble” in general terms
 4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Discuss and investigate how to best divide the large group into smaller support groups that share type and degree of poisoning
 - b. Investigate, identify, and briefly illustrate how these three toxins enter our lives
 - c. Examine, evaluate, and describe how these three toxins and the “bubble” impact our lives, giving five brief examples that illustrate this impact
 - d. Analyze the biblical position regarding these three toxins
 - e. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position
 - B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)
 1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout

2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting

1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 45 minutes)
 - a. Describe and demonstrate various symptoms and consequences that the patients have noted in their studies
 - b. Have the patients express their views and calculations regarding their own individual type and degree of poisoning
 - c. Have the patients express their views and calculations regarding the importance of going through a detoxification program
2. Have the large group discuss how to best divide itself into smaller support groups of 10 to 15 patients, seeking to form groups that share type and degree of poisoning (approximate portion of the meeting: 15 minutes)
3. Follow this with an informative presentation – introduce and discuss the root of the problem (the three toxins and the “bubble”), paying special attention to the instructional objective for this meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 45 minutes)
4. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 15 minutes)
 - a. Investigate, identify, and briefly illustrate how these three toxins enter our lives
 - b. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize how these three toxins and the “bubble” impact our lives, including a brief description of five examples that illustrate this impact
 - c. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding these three toxins
 - d. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

III. **WEEK 3** – large group meeting (all together in one group)

A. Pedagogical summary

1. General topic: the basic solution – the three liberties and the spiritual life that moderates the exercise of these liberties
2. Key skills to be developed: identification and analysis of the basic solution for these three toxins
3. Instructional objectives (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting)
 - a. Describe the three liberties that protect us from these three toxins (including the role and functioning of each liberty)
 - b. Describe the spiritual life that moderates the exercise of these liberties (including the role and functioning of this spiritual life)
4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Divide the larger group into smaller support groups
 - b. Examine, evaluate, and briefly describe the current degree of development of each of these liberties and of the spiritual life capable of moderating these liberties
 - c. Analyze the biblical position regarding these three liberties
 - d. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)

1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting

1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 45 minutes)
 - a. Summarize how these three toxins enter our lives
 - b. Describe and demonstrate various ways how these three toxins and the “bubble” impact our lives
 - c. Summarize the biblical position regarding these three toxins
 - d. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
2. Have the large group divide itself into small support groups 10 to 15 patients, seeking to form groups that share general type and degree of poisoning (approximate portion of the meeting: 15 minutes)
3. Follow this with an informative presentation – introduce and discuss the three liberties and the spiritual life capable of moderating them, paying special attention to the instructional objectives (approximate portion of the meeting: 45 minutes)
4. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 15 minutes)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly describe the current degree of development of each of these liberties and of the spiritual life capable of moderating these liberties, based upon the patient’s personal life or upon the life of an average member of their church’s congregation (upon completion of this task, the patient should have four descriptions, one for the current degree of development of each one of the three liberties, and one for the current degree of development of the spiritual life capable of moderating these liberties)
 - b. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding these three liberties
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by

this biblical position

IV. **WEEK 4** – meeting in the different small support groups

A. Pedagogical summary

1. General topic: the problem of inferiority, insecurity, and individualism
2. Key skills to be developed: identification of our problems in these areas, and analysis of how to overcome these problems
3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): describe the problem of inferiority, insecurity, and individualism
4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by a sense of inferiority, insecurity, and individualism, giving six brief examples that illustrate how they are affected (two examples for each one of these three elements)
 - b. Analyze the biblical position regarding inferiority, insecurity, and individualism
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)

1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting

1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 - a. Describe and demonstrate the current degree of development of each one of these liberties and of the spiritual life capable of moderating these liberties
 - b. Summarize the biblical position regarding these three liberties
 - c. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
2. Follow this with an informative presentation – introduce and discuss the feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and individualism, paying special attention to the instructional objective (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
3. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 10 minutes)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by a sense of inferiority, insecurity, and individualism, including a description of six brief examples that illustrate how they are affected (two examples for each one of these three elements)
 - b. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding inferiority, insecurity, and individualism
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

V. **WEEK 5** – meeting in the different small support groups

A. Pedagogical summary

1. General topic: the impact of these toxins in the area of evaluation and correction, and in the area of interpersonal relations (part 1)
2. Key skills to be developed: identification of how the toxins impact these areas, and analysis of how to overcome this impact
3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): describe how these toxins impact the area of evaluation and correction, and begin to describe how they impact the area of interpersonal relations
4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the areas of evaluation, correction, and interpersonal relations, giving six brief examples that illustrate how they are affected (two examples for each one of these three elements)
 - b. Analyze the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the areas of evaluation, correction, and interpersonal relations
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)

1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting

1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 - a. Describe and demonstrate the degree to which the people of this context are affected by inferiority, insecurity, and individualism
 - b. Summarize the biblical position regarding inferiority, insecurity, and individualism

- c. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
2. Follow this with an informative presentation – introduce and discuss the impact of these toxins in the areas of evaluation, correction, and interpersonal relations, paying special attention to the instructional objective (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
3. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 10 minutes)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the areas of evaluation, correction, and interpersonal relations, including a description of six brief examples that illustrate how they are affected (two examples for each one of these three elements)
 - b. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of evaluation and correction, and in the area of interpersonal relations (part 1)
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

VI. **WEEK 6** – meeting in the different small support groups

A. Pedagogical summary

1. General topic: the impact of these toxins in the area of interpersonal relations (part 2)
2. Key skills to be developed: identification of how the toxins impact this area, and analysis of how to overcome this impact
3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): continue to describe how these toxins impact the area of interpersonal relations
4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of interpersonal relations, giving five new brief examples (not used in the previous lesson) that illustrate how they are affected
 - b. Analyze the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of interpersonal relations
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)

1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting

1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 - a. Describe and demonstrate the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the areas of evaluation, correction, and interpersonal relations
 - b. Summarize the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the areas of evaluation, correction, and interpersonal relations
 - c. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
2. Follow this with an informative presentation – continue to introduce and discuss the impact of these toxins in the area of interpersonal relations, paying special attention to the instructional objective (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
3. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 10 minutes)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of interpersonal relations, including the description of five new brief examples (not used in the previous lesson) that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of interpersonal relations (part 2)
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

VII. **WEEK 7** – meeting in the different small support groups

A. Pedagogical summary

1. General topic: the impact of these toxins in the area of teamwork and unity (part 1)
2. Key skills to be developed: identification of how the toxins impact this area, and analysis of how to overcome this impact
3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): begin to describe how these toxins impact the area of teamwork and unity
4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of teamwork and unity, giving six brief examples that illustrate this poisoning (three examples for each one of these two elements)

of teamwork and unity)

- b. Analyze the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teamwork and unity
- c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)

1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting

1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 - a. Describe and demonstrate the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of interpersonal relations
 - b. Summarize the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of interpersonal relations
 - c. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
2. Follow this with an informative presentation – begin to introduce and discuss the impact of these toxins in the area of teamwork and unity, paying special attention to the instructional objective (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
3. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 10 minutes)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of teamwork and unity, including the description of six brief examples that illustrate this poisoning (three examples for each one of these two elements of teamwork and unity)
 - b. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teamwork and unity
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

VIII. **WEEK 8** – meeting in the different small support groups

A. Pedagogical summary

1. General topic: the impact of these toxins in the area of teamwork and unity (part 2)
2. Key skills to be developed: identification of how the toxins impact this area, and analysis of how to overcome this impact
3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): continue to describe how these toxins impact the area of teamwork and unity
4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of teamwork and unity, giving six new brief examples (not used in the previous lesson) that illustrate this poisoning (three new examples for each one of these two elements of teamwork and unity)
 - b. Analyze the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teamwork and unity
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)

1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting

1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 - a. Describe and demonstrate the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area teamwork and unity
 - b. Summarize the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teamwork and unity
 - c. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
2. Follow this with an informative presentation – continue to introduce and discuss the impact of these toxins in the area of teamwork and unity, paying special attention to the instructional objective (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
3. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 10 minutes)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of teamwork and unity, including the description of six new brief examples (not used in the previous lesson) that illustrate this poisoning (three examples for each one of these two elements of teamwork and unity)
 - b. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teamwork and unity

- c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

IX. WEEK 9 – meeting in the different small support groups

A. Pedagogical summary

1. General topic: the impact of these toxins in the area of maturity (part 1)
2. Key skills to be developed: identification of how the toxins impact this area, and analysis of how to overcome this impact
3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): begin to describe how these toxins impact the area of maturity
4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of maturity, giving five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Analyze the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of maturity
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)

1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting

1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 - a. Describe and demonstrate the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area teamwork and unity
 - b. Summarize the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teamwork and unity
 - c. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
2. Follow this with an informative presentation – begin to introduce and discuss the impact of these toxins in the area of maturity, paying special attention to the instructional objective (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
3. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 10 minutes)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of maturity, including the description of five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of maturity
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

X. WEEK 10 – meeting in the different small support groups

A. Pedagogical summary

1. General topic: the impact of these toxins in the area of maturity (part 2)
2. Key skills to be developed: identification of how the toxins impact this area, and analysis of how to overcome this impact
3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): continue to describe how these toxins impact the area of maturity
4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of maturity, giving five new brief examples (not used in the previous lesson) that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Analyze the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of maturity
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)

1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting

1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 - a. Describe and demonstrate the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of maturity
 - b. Summarize the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of maturity
 - c. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
2. Follow this with an informative presentation – continue to introduce and discuss the impact of these toxins in the area of maturity,

paying special attention to the instructional objective (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)

3. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 10 minutes)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of maturity, including the description of five new brief examples (not used in the previous lesson) that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of maturity
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

XI. **WEEK 11** – meeting in the different small support groups

A. Pedagogical summary

1. General topic: the impact of these toxins in the area of teaching and discipleship (part 1)
2. Key skills to be developed: identification of how the toxins impact this area, and analysis of how to overcome this impact
3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): begin to describe how these toxins impact the area of teaching and discipleship
4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of teaching and discipleship, giving five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Analyze the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teaching and discipleship
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)

1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting

1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 - a. Describe and demonstrate the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of maturity
 - b. Summarize the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of maturity
 - c. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
2. Follow this with an informative presentation – begin to introduce and discuss the impact of these toxins in the area of teaching and discipleship, paying special attention to the instructional objective (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
3. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 10 minutes)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of teaching and discipleship, including the description of five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teaching and discipleship
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

XII. **WEEK 12** – meeting in the different small support groups

A. Pedagogical summary

1. General topic: the impact of these toxins in the area of teaching and discipleship (part 2)
2. Key skills to be developed: identification of how the toxins impact this area, and analysis of how to overcome this impact
3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): continue to describe how these toxins impact the area of teaching and discipleship
4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of teaching and discipleship, giving five new brief examples (not used in the previous lesson) that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Analyze the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teaching and discipleship
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)

1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting

1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)

- a. Describe and demonstrate the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of teaching and discipleship
 - b. Summarize the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teaching and discipleship
 - c. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
2. Follow this with an informative presentation – continue to introduce and discuss the impact of these toxins in the area of teaching and discipleship, paying special attention to the instructional objective (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 3. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 10 minutes)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of teaching and discipleship, including the description of five new brief examples (not used in the previous lesson) that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teaching and discipleship
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

XIII. **WEEK 13** – meeting in the different small support groups

- A. Pedagogical summary
 1. General topic: the impact of these toxins in the area of leadership
 2. Key skills to be developed: identification of how the toxins impact this area, and analysis of how to overcome this impact
 3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): describe how these toxins impact the area of leadership
 4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of leadership, giving five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Analyze the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of leadership
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position
- B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)
 1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
 2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet
- C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting
 1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 - a. Describe and demonstrate the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of teaching and discipleship
 - b. Summarize the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teaching and discipleship
 - c. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
 2. Follow this with an informative presentation – introduce and discuss the impact of these toxins in the area of leadership, paying special attention to the instructional objective (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 3. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 10 minutes)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of leadership, including the description of five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of leadership
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

XIV. **WEEK 14** – meeting in the different small support groups

- A. Pedagogical summary
 1. General topic: the impact of these toxins in the area of planning and organization
 2. Key skills to be developed: identification of how the toxins impact this area, and analysis of how to overcome this impact
 3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): describe how these toxins impact the area of planning and organization
 4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of planning and organization, giving five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Analyze the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of planning and organization

- c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position
 - B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)
 - 1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
 - 2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet
 - C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting
 - 1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 - a. Describe and demonstrate the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of leadership
 - b. Summarize the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of leadership
 - c. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
 - 2. Follow this with an informative presentation – introduce and discuss the impact of these toxins in the area of planning and organization, paying special attention to the instructional objective (approximate portion of the meeting: 55 minutes)
 - 3. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 10 minutes)
 - a. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of planning and organization, including the description of five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning
 - b. Identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of planning and organization
 - c. Examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position
- XV. **WEEK 15** – meeting in the different small support groups
- A. Pedagogical summary
 - 1. General topic: conflict detection and management – a test of being able to identify, analyze and counteract the impact of these toxins
 - 2. Key skills to be developed: identification and analysis of how the toxins impact this area, and the creation of an antidote capable of counteracting this impact
 - 3. Instructional objective (the focus of the informative presentation in this meeting): based upon the example of conflict detection and management (given in appendix 9), illustrate how to identify and analyze the impact of these toxins, and how to create an antidote capable of counteracting this impact
 - 4. Learning objectives (the focus of the homework and of the discussion in the next meeting)
 - a. Study, analyze, and briefly summarize the general degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of conflict detection and management (in other words, the patient is to give their general appraisal of this poisoning)
 - b. Identify, analyze, and briefly describe five varied illustrations of this poisoning (these illustrations should include a variety of responsible toxins and a variety of areas impacted) – please note that the patient may base a maximum of three of their five illustrations in the impacts mentioned in the handout covering conflict detection and management, but they should also come up with a minimum of two new illustrations (detected, identified, and analyzed by this patient on their own)
 - c. Then compare their five illustrations with the previous lessons of this detox program where antidote suggestions are offered for these different toxins and areas, and create an effective antidote to counteract each one of these five illustrations (their antidote should contain a minimum of two Bible portions or two groups of Bible portions for each illustration) – please note that this lesson is not limited only to the Bible portions mentioned in the previous lessons, but rather the patient is permitted to use any Bible portion that offers to counteract the toxic effects shown in their illustration
 - B. Required materials (to be handed out during the class session)
 - 1. Informational handout – see appendix 4 for the suggested content of this handout
 - 2. Homework sheet – see appendix 5 for the suggested content of this homework sheet
 - C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting
 - 1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have investigated and learned during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 50 minutes)
 - a. Describe and demonstrate the degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of planning and organization
 - b. Summarize the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of planning and organization
 - c. Summarize what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position, and what the effects will be of this transformation
 - 2. Follow this with an informative presentation – introduce and discuss how to identify and analyze the impact of these toxins in the area of conflict detection and management, and how to create an antidote capable of counteracting this impact (see appendix 9 for this topic), paying special attention to the instructional objective (approximate portion of the meeting: 50 minutes)
 - 3. Finish by assigning and explaining the homework for the next meeting – each patient should complete this homework before the

next meeting (approximate portion of this meeting: 20 minutes)

- a. Study, analyze, and briefly summarize the general degree to which the people of this context are affected by poisoning in the area of conflict detection and management (in other words, the patient is to give their general appraisal of this poisoning)
- b. Identify, analyze, and briefly describe five varied illustrations of this poisoning (these illustrations should include a variety of responsible toxins and a variety of areas impacted) – please note that the patient may base a maximum of three of their five illustrations in the impacts mentioned in the handout covering conflict detection and management, but they should also come up with a minimum of two new illustrations (detected, identified, and analyzed by this patient on their own)
- c. Then compare their five illustrations with the previous lessons of this detox program where antidote suggestions are offered for these different toxins and areas, and create an effective antidote to counteract each one of these five illustrations (their antidote should contain a minimum of two Bible portions or two groups of Bible portions for each illustration) – please note that this lesson is not limited only to the Bible portions mentioned in the previous lessons, but rather the patient is permitted to use any Bible portion that offers to counteract the toxic effects shown in their illustration

XVI. **WEEK 16** – meeting in the different small support groups

A. Pedagogical summary

1. General topic: summary and questions
2. Key skills to be developed: summarizing the detoxification process, answering any questions, and clarifying any concerns
3. Instructional objectives
 - a. Briefly summarize the process of counteracting these toxins
 - b. Open the time for questions, concerns, observations, etc.
4. Learning objectives
 - a. Answer any question
 - b. Clarify any concern or unclear area
 - c. Learn from the comments and observations made by the other patients

B. Required materials – none

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting

1. Start with the discussion time – discuss what the patients have identified, analyzed, and developed during the previous week, paying special attention to the learning objectives and key skills assigned to the previous meeting (approximate portion of the meeting: 1 hour 30 minutes)
 - a. Have each patient briefly share their illustrations with the remainder of the group, and then describe their antidote for each of their illustrations
 - b. Compare the antidotes developed by the different members of the group, looking to perfect the antidote itself and their abilities in creating antidotes
 - c. If time is left over, the group may work together and develop other illustrations and antidotes
2. Follow this with an informative presentation – briefly summarize the entire detoxification process, helping the patients to better understand how the individual parts of the process are joined together to form the whole (approximate portion of the meeting: 10 minutes)
3. Finish with a time for questions, observations, comments, etc. (approximate portion of the meeting: 20 minutes)

XVII. **WEEK 17** (if necessary) – meeting in the different small support groups or meeting in the large group

A. Pedagogical summary

1. General topic: questions, comments, observations, etc.
2. Key skills to be developed: answering any questions, clarifying any concerns, and sharing any observations and comments
3. Learning objectives
 - a. Answer any question
 - b. Clarify any concern or unclear area
 - c. Learn from the comments and observations made by the other patients

B. Required materials – none

C. Suggested class schedule for the meeting: a time of questions, observations, comments, etc. (approximate portion of the meeting: 2 hours)

Appendix 4

Suggested content for the class handouts

General format: weekly meetings of two hours for 16 or 17 weeks

- I. **WEEK 1** – two basic introductions
 - A. An introduction to the principal symptoms of poisoning with these three toxins (see appendix 8)
 - B. An introduction to the detoxification program (format, purpose, general overall content, etc.)
- II. **WEEK 2** – a general introduction to **the three toxins** and **the bubble**
 - A. Democratized feudalism (see chapters 3 and 4)
 - 1. Being sovereign in our lives, living autonomously, living our own lives
 - 2. Being the most important person in our world, being served by others
 - 3. Finding our identity, worth, and importance in ourselves and in the kingdom that we have built
 - B. The bubble – a brief general description based on the information in this text (see chapters 3 and 4)
 - C. Activism (see chapters 7 and 8)
 - 1. Thinking that doing is more important than being, and that by doing the right activities or feeling the right emotions we can change our nature and become what we desire to be
 - 2. Focusing on doing instead of being
 - 3. Trusting more in our own actions and abilities than in God, and trusting more in human programs and activities than in evangelism and in the change that the Holy Spirit brings through discipleship and submission
 - 4. Confusing having success in our activities with the blessing of God
 - 5. Being so involved in activities that we run the risk of burnout, stagnation, and/or frustration
 - D. Passivity (see chapters 11 and 12)
 - 1. Thinking that imitating means duplicating or replicating (mechanically copying) plans and programs, or reading and becoming informed about what others think
 - 2. Lacking an adequate base for the successful implementation of a program
 - 3. Practicing a ritual and repetitive religion, rather than a dynamic and transforming one
- III. **WEEK 3** – an introduction to **the three liberties** and **the spiritual life** that moderates the exercise of these liberties
 - A. Spiritual liberty (see chapter 18)
 - 1. All are equal before God
 - 2. All have the Holy Spirit
 - 3. All can study the Bible and discover biblical truths
 - 4. All can correctly apply the biblical truths
 - 5. All are to be actively studying the Bible and making applications
 - B. Relational liberty (see chapter 19)
 - 1. All have equal social status in the body of Christ
 - 2. All are united into only one body of Christ
 - 3. All are to develop social maturity
 - 4. All are needed for their unique gifting
 - 5. All are important to the body and vital to its functioning
 - 6. All are to live and minister in mutual submission and interdependence
 - C. Ministerial liberty (see chapter 20)
 - 1. All are priests
 - 2. All have the Holy Spirit
 - 3. All are gifted and their gifts need to be used
 - 4. All are to be involved in the ministry
 - 5. All are important for the church and for the ministry

- D. The spiritual life that moderates the exercise of these liberties (see chapter 16)
 - 1. General description of this spiritual life
 - 2. Its moderating role in the exercise of these liberties
- IV. **WEEK 4** – an introduction to the feelings of **inferiority**, **insecurity**, and **individualism**
 - A. Inferiority
 - 1. The impact of democratized feudalism (see chapters 3 and 4)
 - 2. The impact of passivity (see chapter 12)
 - B. Insecurity
 - 1. The impact of democratized feudalism (see chapters 3 and 4)
 - 2. The impact of passivity (see chapter 12)
 - C. Individualism – the impact of democratized feudalism (see chapters 3 and 4)
- V. **WEEK 5** – an introduction to the impact of these toxins on the process of **evaluation and correction** and on **interpersonal relations** (part 1)
 - A. The impact of democratized feudalism on the process of evaluation and correction (see chapter 4)
 - 1. Being sovereign in our lives and living autonomously
 - 2. Being free of any evaluation and correction by others
 - B. The impact of democratized feudalism on interpersonal relations (see chapter 4)
 - 1. Being self-sufficient and not needing others, living isolated from the rest
 - 2. Forming our own personal version of the truth
 - 3. Defending ourselves when our lordship is threatened, and seeking to obligate others (God included) to respect our lordship
- VI. **WEEK 6** – an introduction to the impact of these toxins on **interpersonal relations** (part 2)
 - A. The impact of democratized feudalism (see chapter 4)
 - 1. Living as if the rest existed for our benefit
 - 2. Leading, teaching, and lording it over others, instead of listening to, learning from, and serving others
 - 3. Hiding sin and errors
 - B. The impact of passivity (see chapter 12)
 - 1. Using and possibly abusing the contributions of others
 - 2. Feeling a strong dependence on and loyalty to our professional leaders, being neither innovative nor entrepreneurial, and expecting the same of those who serve under us
- VII. **WEEK 7** – an introduction to the impact of these toxins on **teamwork and unity** (part 1)
 - A. The impact of democratized feudalism (see chapter 4)
 - 1. Working isolated from the rest, with our own individualistic interpretation of the team’s goals and plans, without a true sense of unity and teamwork or a high degree of commitment to the team and their ministry
 - 2. Tending not to develop or apply job descriptions, tending to base evaluations more on dependency, loyalty, and service to the leader than on performance, and tending not to develop long-range plans and strategies
 - 3. Being more pragmatic than ethical
 - 4. Being either the leader of the team or withdrawing from the team
 - B. The impact of activism (see chapter 8) – confusing doing activities in proximity with being a team
- VIII. **WEEK 8** – an introduction to the impact of these toxins on **teamwork and unity** (part 2)
 - A. The impact of activism (see chapter 8)
 - 1. Confusing activity or feeling a certain emotion with productivity
 - 2. Thinking from a more pragmatic viewpoint than ethical
 - 3. Understanding “imitate” as reproducing activities, rather than the transformation underlying these activities
 - B. The impact of passivity (see chapter 12)
 - 1. Depending too much on others (especially the experts and team leader, but not necessarily the other team members), lacking in interdependent initiative with the other team members
 - 2. Using and possibly abusing the contributions of others
 - 3. Being more isolated from the team process than committed to it
- IX. **WEEK 9** – an introduction to the impact of these toxins on **maturity** (part 1)
 - A. The impact of democratized feudalism (see chapter 4) – living in the lower levels of Maslow’s pyramid
 - B. The impact of activism (see chapter 8)
 - 1. Confusing doing activities and feeling emotions with true growth and maturity
 - 2. Being so involved in activities that we jeopardize the transformation we look for
 - 3. Declaring growth and maturity based on a list of completed activities or on some emotions felt, rather than on transformed lives
 - 4. Separating the theoretical world or the emotional world from the real world
- X. **WEEK 10** – an introduction to the impact of these toxins on **maturity** (part 2)
 - A. The impact of activism (see chapter 8)

1. Feigning a change when it is just mere activity
2. Practicing a ritual and repetitive religion
- B. The impact of passivity (see chapter 12)
 1. Depending upon others for growth and for the solutions to life's problems, rather than attempting to solve these through an innovative and interdependent spirit
 2. Being more of an imitator than an innovator, seeing innovation as something dangerous
 3. Confusing passivity (fulfilling activities prescribed by others) with growth and maturity
 4. Being very loyal to our pastor, our church, and our church denomination
- XI. **WEEK 11** – an introduction to the impact of these toxins on **teaching and discipleship** (part 1)
 - A. The impact of democratized feudalism (see chapter 4)
 1. Viewing the growth of others as a threat
 2. Teaching our bubble rather than biblical content
 3. Emphasizing accomplishing activities rather than transforming lives, and announcing truths rather than applying them
 - B. The impact of activism (see chapter 8)
 1. Confusing doing activities with being a good teacher or student, and confusing activity or an emotion felt with having understood and applied the truth taught
 2. Declaring growth and maturity based on a list of completed activities or on some emotions felt, rather than on transformed lives
- XII. **WEEK 12** – an introduction to the impact of these toxins on **teaching and discipleship** (part 2)
 - A. The impact of activism (see chapter 8)
 1. Thinking that we have already changed our nature because of our behavior
 2. Teaching backwards
 - B. The impact of passivity (see chapter 12)
 1. Teaching the behavioral patterns and the bubble of others (the experts), instead of teaching and applying biblical truths and principles
 2. Being afraid to think in an innovative and interdependent manner
 3. Preferring that our students get their instruction and information from us as teacher, rather than having the students investigate and study the Bible for themselves
- XIII. **WEEK 13** – an introduction to the impact of these toxins on **leadership**
 - A. The impact of democratized feudalism (see chapter 4)
 1. Providing inconsistent leadership, creating an unstable work/ministry environment, postponing making unpopular decisions, and avoiding situations that are charged with emotion, conflict, and discipline
 2. Resisting any questioning of our authority, ability, or leadership; attacking, destroying, ridiculing, and making fun of others so that we look better; protecting our territory and vassals; and controlling, dominating, and keeping our vassals in subjection
 3. Sacrificing vassals when necessary for security
 4. Duplicating bubbles
 - B. The impact of activism (see chapter 8)
 1. Confusing doing activities with being a good leader and with transforming lives
 2. Declaring changes based on a list of completed activities or on an emotion felt, rather than on transformed lives
 3. Thinking from a more pragmatic viewpoint than ethical
 - C. The impact of passivity (see chapter 12) – expecting that our followers depend on us, be faithful to us, and serve us
- XIV. **WEEK 14** – an introduction to the impact of these toxins on **planning and organization**
 - A. The impact of activism (see chapter 8)
 1. Confusing activity or emotions felt with productivity, or thinking that it doesn't matter so much what we do, just that we do something
 2. Making activities more important than planning and organizing
 3. Trying to reproduce activities without having previously reproduced the reality that underlies these activities and gives them meaning
 4. Thinking from a more pragmatic viewpoint than ethical
 5. Lacking stability and focus
 - B. The impact of passivity (see chapter 12)
 1. Imitating activities that belong to imported programs, but without understanding the reality that underlies and gives meaning to these activities and programs
 2. Lacking an adequate base for the successful implementation of a program
- XV. **WEEK 15** – see **appendix 9** that can be adapted, summarized, or simply copied and given to the patients
- XVI. **WEEK 16** – no handout needed
- XVII. **WEEK 17** (if necessary) – no handout needed

Appendix 5

Suggested content for the homework assignments

General format: weekly meetings of two hours for 16 or 17 weeks

I. WEEK 1 – two basic introductions

- A. Read the two handouts: the principal symptoms of poisoning with these three toxins, and an introduction to the detoxification program
- B. Analyze your own life and the lives of your friends to identify ten typical symptoms or consequences of poisoning, jot them down on a piece of paper, and bring them to the next meeting
- C. Examine and evaluate your own type and degree of poisoning
- D. Examine and calculate the importance of going through a detoxification program

II. WEEK 2 – the three toxins and the bubble

A. Examination and analysis

1. Investigate, identify, and give two brief illustrations of how these three toxins enter our lives
2. Examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize how these three toxins and the “bubble” impact our lives, including a brief description of five examples that illustrate this impact

B. Biblical reflection: identify and explain the biblical position regarding these three toxins

1. Democratized feudalism (see chapter 6)
 - a. Being sovereign in our lives, living autonomously, living our own lives
 - Whom should we live to serve? To whom do we belong? – Dan. 9:11; Matt. 20:25–28; 23:11; Mark 10:43; Luke 22:24–27; John 13:1–17; Rom. 14:4, 12; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; Gal. 5:13–14; Col. 3:24; 4:1
 - How should we consider ourselves? How should we relate to others? – Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; 2:20; Titus 1:1; Col. 3:15–22
 - Should we have sovereignty in certain areas? Should we have private kingdoms and things that we consider exclusively ours? – Luke 14:33; John 4:34; 5:30; 20:21; Rom. 14:20–21; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; 2 Cor. 5:15; 6:3; Gal. 2:20
 - b. Being the most important person in our world, being served by others
 - How should we consider others? How should we think of ourselves (regardless of our training and education)? – Phil. 2:3; Rom 12:3, 10–11; Col. 3:12; 2 Cor. 12:11
 - What should be our goal with regards to service? – Matt. 20:25–28; Mark 10:43–45; Luke 22:24–27; 2 Cor. 4:5; 11:8; Gal. 5:13
 - What should be our motive? – Eph. 6:6–7; Col. 3:17
 - c. Finding our identity, worth, and importance in ourselves and in the kingdom that we have built
 - On what are our identity, importance, and authority based? – 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:5–6; 3:16–21; Col. 1:9–12
 - How should we consider our previous life? – Phil. 3:4–8
 - For what should we live and die? – Rom. 14:7–8
2. Activism (see chapter 10)
 - a. Thinking that doing is more important than being, and that by doing the right activities or feeling the right emotions we can change our nature and become what we desire to be
 - What is the basis for what we are (our being)? How does what we are (our being) become transformed? – Prov. 23:7; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26; John 6:28–29; Rom. 12:1–2
 - Does simply doing the proper activities please God? – Mal. 1:10; Matt. 23:23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9
 - What are the proper importance and place of works (doing)? – James 2:14–18; Eph. 2:8–10
 - Should we concentrate more on doing or on being? – Luke 10:38–42
 - b. Trusting more in our own actions and abilities than in God, and trusting more in human programs and activities than in evangelism and in the change that the Holy Spirit brings through discipleship and submission
 - Who does the work of transformation? Can we achieve it in our own strength? – Zech. 4:6; Phil. 1:6; 2:13
 - In whose power are we to live? – Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:5; 2 Cor. 6:7; Eph. 6:10
 - c. Confusing having success in our activities with the blessing of God

- Does success in outward activities necessarily mean that God is blessing us? – Matt. 23:2, 5–7, 33
- d. Being so involved in activities that we run the risk of burnout, stagnation, and/or frustration
 - Is it wrong to take time to rest? Are there times when it is necessary to pull back from activities and commitments? – Gen. 2:2; Matt. 14:13, 23; Mark 3:20; 6:31–32; Luke 22:41, 43
- 3. Passivity (see chapter 14)
 - a. Thinking that imitating means duplicating or replicating (mechanically copying) plans and programs, or reading and becoming informed about what others think
 - Is it wrong to imitate other human beings? If it is permitted, what type of person should we imitate? And what does the Bible mean when it refers to “imitating” others? – 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Cor. 8:1–7; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 2:14; Heb. 6:12; 12:1–3
 - Whom should we principally be imitating? – 1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6
 - b. Lacking an adequate base for the successful implementation of a program
 - What did Jesus think of the Pharisees who did hollow activities with no real substance undergirding them? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
 - Does a successful venture require a base that is solid and well thought out? – Matt. 7:26–27; Luke 14:28–32
 - c. Practicing a ritual and repetitive religion, rather than a dynamic and transforming one
 - Is God pleased by a mere ritual and repetitive religion? Is a ritual and repetitive religion capable of transforming our nature? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:6–10, 12–14; 2:17; 3:14–15; Matt. 6:7; 15:7–9; Mark 7:6–13

C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in our own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.

III. WEEK 3 – the three liberties and the spiritual life that moderates them

A. **Examination and analysis:** examine, evaluate, and briefly describe the current degree of development of each of these liberties and of the spiritual life capable of moderating these liberties, based upon your personal life or upon the life of an average member of your church’s congregation (upon completion of this task, the patient should have four descriptions, one for the current degree of development of each one of the three liberties, and one for the current degree of development of the spiritual life capable of moderating these liberties)

B. **Biblical reflection:** identify and explain the biblical position regarding these three liberties

1. Spiritual liberty (see chapter 18)
 - a. All are equal before God
 - Is there an equality of all believers before God? – Rom. 8:16–17; 1 Cor. 3:7; Gal. 3:28; 5:6; 6:15; Eph. 3:6
 - Why are certain individuals given to the church as pastors and teachers? How does this impact the equality of the body of Christ? Who is responsible for the work of the ministry? – Eph. 4:11–16
 - How many chief shepherds do we have? How many flocks are there? – John 10:16; Acts 20:28; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4
 - What should be the focus of the under shepherds (those leaders who serve as shepherds under the chief shepherd)? – Matt. 20:25–28; Mark 10:42–45; Luke 22:25–27; Acts 20:28–31; 2 Cor. 1:24; 1 Pet. 5:2–3
 - b. All have the Holy Spirit, and thus are able to study the Bible, discover biblical truths, and correctly apply those truths
 - What portion of the body of Christ has the Holy Spirit? – Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13
 - What portion of the body of Christ can study and understand God’s Word? – John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16–17
 - What portion of the body of Christ can and should apply God’s Word? What portion is the best equipped to apply it to their personal concrete situation? – Acts 17:10–11; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16–17
2. Relational liberty (see chapter 19)
 - a. All have equal social status in the body of Christ
 - Does the fact that there should be leaders and teachers in the church nullify the equality in the body of Christ or the importance and indispensability of each and every member? – Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; 5:25–26
 - Does the fact that we have differing gifts and roles divide or prioritize the body of Christ? – Rom. 12:4–5; 1 Cor. 12:11–12, 20, 25
 - How many bodies of Christ are there, and what should be our relationship in that context? – Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 3:6; 4:4–6
 - b. All are vitally needed for their unique gifting
 - Who appointed the gifts? Is this appointment intentional, correct, and adequate? – 1 Cor. 12:6, 11, 18
 - What is the purpose of the gifts? Are they necessary for the ministry? Are they given to all believers? Are they given to establish priorities or a social hierarchy within the body? – Rom. 12:3, 6–8; 1 Cor. 12:7, 21

- Given that all have gifts that are unique and necessary for the ministry, what percentage of the body of Christ is important and vital for the functioning of the body? – Rom. 12:3–21; 1 Cor. 12:4, 7–11, 12–30
- c. All are to live and minister in mutual submission and mature interdependence
- How should we relate to each other as members of the body of Christ? – Mark 9:35; Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 12:25; Eph. 4:2, 25; 5:21; Phil. 2:3–7; Col. 3:13, 16; 1 Thess. 4:9; 5:11–15; Heb. 3:13; 10:24; James 5:16; 1 Pet. 4:8–11; 1 John 3:11; 2 John 1:5
 - What are childish relationships like? What are mature relationships like? – Luke 7:31–32; Phil. 2:3–4
3. Ministerial liberty (see chapter 20)
- a. All are priests with the Holy Spirit
- What percentage of the body of Christ are priests? – Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5–9; Rev. 1:5–6; 5:9–10
 - What percentage of the body of Christ has the Holy Spirit, and thus the power and guidance necessary to fulfill its ministerial roles? – John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13
- b. All are specially gifted, and it is vitally important that they be involved in the ministry
- What percentage of the body of Christ is necessary, important, and indispensable because of its gifts and functions? – Rom. 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 12:4, 7–30; 1 Pet. 4:10–11
 - What percentage of the body of Christ should be involved in the ministry? – 1 Cor. 12:7, 12–30; 16:15; Eph. 4:11–12; Col. 4:17; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:5–8; 1 Pet. 4:10–11
- C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position
1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
 2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
 3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
 4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.
- IV. **WEEK 4 – the feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and individualism**
- A. **Examination and analysis:** examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context, including yourself, are affected by a sense of inferiority, insecurity, and individualism. Include a description of six brief examples that illustrate how people are affected (two examples for each one of these three elements).
- B. **Biblical reflection:** identify and explain the biblical position regarding inferiority, insecurity, and individualism
1. Inferiority (see chapters 6 and 14)
 - As believers, are we the same as we were before we accepted Christ as our Savior? – 2 Cor. 5:17
 - As believers, are our sins forgiven? Are we just and holy? Do we all have the same Holy Spirit to guide us and give us power? – John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 3:24; 5:1; 8:14; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:11, 13; Col. 2:13–14; 1 John 2:12
 - As believers, does our personal level of power and ability really matter that much? – Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:4–5; 2 Cor. 4:7; 6:7; Eph. 6:10; 2 Tim. 1:7
 - As believers, should we base our hope in our abilities and power, or in another source? – Ps. 39:7; 62:5; 71:5; Rom. 15:4
 - As believers, where does our sufficiency and the sufficiency of others come from? – 2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13
 - Are some members of the body of Christ inferior to others? – Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16
 2. Insecurity (see chapter 6 and 14)
 - As believers, upon what or whom does the completion of our transformation depend? – Phil. 1:6; Jude 1:24–25
 - As believers, upon what or whom does our sufficiency and the sufficiency of others depend? – 2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13
 - Do all believers have the same Holy Spirit guiding us in understanding and applying biblical truths and principles? – John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13
 - What do we have to fear? Can we have true peace? – Rom. 8:31–35; John 14:27; Col. 3:15
 - Are some members of the body of Christ less necessary or more expendable than others? – Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16
 3. Individualism (see chapter 6)
 - To whom do we belong and whose life should we live? – 1 Cor. 6:19–20; Gal. 2:20
 - How should we live in relation to others? – Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; 12:12–27; Gal. 5:13–14; 6:2; Eph. 4:1–6, 16, 31–32; Col. 3:12–17
 - Whose desires should govern our actions? – Col. 3:17
- C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position
1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?

2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
 3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
 4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.
- V. **WEEK 5 – the impact of these toxins on evaluation & correction, and on interpersonal relations – part 1**
- A. **Examination and analysis:** examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context, including yourself, are affected by poisoning in the areas of evaluation, correction, and interpersonal relations. Include a description of six brief examples that illustrate how people are affected (two examples for each one of these three elements).
 - B. **Biblical reflection:** identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of evaluation and correction, and in the area of interpersonal relations (part 1)
 1. The impact of democratized feudalism on the process of evaluation and correction (see chapter 6)
 - a. Being sovereign in our lives and living autonomously
 - How should we consider ourselves? – Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; 2:20; Titus 1:1
 - Whose will should we do, and with what degree of dedication? – Mark 3:35; Eph. 6:6
 - b. Being free of any evaluation and correction by others
 - Should there be evaluation and correction in our lives? – 2 Tim. 3:16–17
 - By whose rules or standards should we live? – Ps. 119:11; Acts 15:28–29; Rom. 12:9–21; Col. 3:5–7; 1 Thess. 4:3–8; 2 Tim. 3:16
 - Whose will should we obey and serve? For whom should we live? – Rom. 14:7–9; 2 Cor. 6:4; Gal. 2:20; 5:22–23
 - What should our will be like? – Isa. 45:9; 64:8; Jer. 18:6
 2. The impact of democratized feudalism on interpersonal relations (see chapter 6)
 - a. Being self-sufficient and not needing others, living isolated from the rest
 - Where does our sufficiency really come from? – 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 1:9; 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13
 - Where should our hope and confidence be placed? – Ps. 39:7; 62:5; 71:5
 - How should we live and work with others? – Rom. 12:4–8; Eph. 4:1–7; 5:21; Phil. 2:1–4; Col. 3:15–22
 - b. Forming our own personal version of the truth
 - Where does truth really come from? – Rom. 3:4; John 6:67–68; 14:6; 17:17
 - Do we all have equally sovereign opinions? – Eph. 4:15, 25
 - Should we all be following our own version of the truth? – Phil. 2:1–4
 - c. Defending ourselves when our lordship is threatened, and seeking to obligate others (God included) to respect our lordship
 - Whom should we serve? – Matt. 20:25–28; 23:11; Mark 10:43; Luke 22:24–27; John 13:1–17
 - How should we consider and treat others, even those who differ from us? – Phil. 2:3; Rom. 12:10, 14, 17, 19; Col. 3:13
 - Should we use our armor to protect ourselves? – Eph. 6:10–17
 - How should we minister to those who dislike us and don't believe in us? – 2 Cor. 1:24; 2:7, 10; 3:2–3; 6:4–10, 11, 13; 13:10
 - C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position
 1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
 2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
 3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
 4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.
- VI. **WEEK 6 – the impact of these toxins on interpersonal relations – part 2**
- A. **Examination and analysis:** examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context (including yourself) are affected by poisoning in the area of interpersonal relations. Include a description of five new brief examples (not used in the previous lesson) that illustrate this poisoning.
 - B. **Biblical reflection:** identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of interpersonal relations (part 2)
 1. The impact of democratized feudalism (see chapter 6)
 - a. Living as if the rest existed for our benefit
 - How should we treat others? – Rom. 12:10, 16; 13:8; Col. 3:11–14; 4:1; James 2:1–9
 - What type of love should we have? – 2 Cor. 6:6
 - How should we function? – Rom. 12:5; 2 Cor. 6:11–13
 - How should we regard our rights? – Phil. 2:5–8
 - b. Leading, teaching, and lording it over others, instead of listening to, learning from, and serving others
 - Should we be filled with ourselves? – Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Eph. 5:18
 - What about listening, learning, adapting, and serving? – Matt. 20:25–28; 1 Cor. 9:19–22; James 1:19

- How should we serve? – Matt. 6:5; 23:6–8, 10–13; Mark 10:42–44
 - How should we lead? – 2 Cor. 7:2–3; 11:8–9
 - How should we use authority? – 2 Cor. 1:24; 13:10
 - Should we seek to teach? – James 3:1; Eph. 4:11–13
- c. Hiding sin and errors
- What should we do when we sin? – 1 John 1:9
 - What should we do when our sins involve others? – James 5:16
 - Should we live with hidden black truths? – Eph. 4:14–16, 25
2. The impact of passivity (see chapter 14)
- a. Using and possibly abusing the contributions of others (experts, professionals, clergy, team members)
- Is it biblical to have others help us in our growth? If so, should these individuals be used in a way that short circuits our growth? – Eph. 4:11–16
- b. Feeling a strong dependence on and loyalty to our professional leaders, being neither innovative nor entrepreneurial, and expecting the same of those who serve under us
- In whom should we place our trust and loyalty? – Ps. 91:2; Isa. 12:2; 26:4; 2 Cor. 1:9
 - Is it biblical to depend upon others and have a form of secondary loyalty to them, as long as this does not short circuit our growth? – 1 Tim. 4:13–16; 2 Tim. 2:2, 24
 - Does the fact that there should be leaders and teachers in the church nullify the equality in the body of Christ or the importance and indispensability of each and every member? – Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16
- C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position
1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
 2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
 3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
 4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.
- VII. **WEEK 7 – the impact of these toxins on teamwork and unity – part 1**
- A. **Examination and analysis:** examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context (including yourself) are affected by poisoning in the area of teamwork and unity. Include a description of six brief examples that illustrate this poisoning (three examples for each one of these two elements of teamwork and unity).
- B. **Biblical reflection:** identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teamwork and unity
1. The impact of democratized feudalism (see chapter 6)
 - a. Working isolated from the rest, with our own individualistic interpretation of the team's goals and plans, without a true sense of unity and teamwork or a high degree of commitment to the team and their ministry
 - How should we work with others? – Acts 10:28; Rom. 12:16; 14:1–3, 10; Col. 3:12–14
 - How should we function? – Rom. 12:5; 2 Cor. 6:11–13
 - Whom should we seek to please? – Rom. 15:1
 - Who or what should benefit from our functioning? – Rom. 12:4–8, 10, 18
 - Should we be individualistic in our thinking? – Rom. 15:5–6; 2 Cor. 1:24
 - b. Tending not to develop or apply job descriptions, tending to base evaluations more on dependency, loyalty, and service to the leader than on performance, and tending not to develop long-range plans and strategies
 - Should we analyze the fruits of others, including their performance? – Matt. 7:15–27
 - Are job descriptions and performance evaluations biblical? – 1 Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:6–16
 - Did the early church use job descriptions and evaluations? – Acts 6:1–6
 - Are planning and organization important? – Matt. 7:26–27; Luke 14:28–32; Acts 6:1–4
 - c. Being more pragmatic than ethical
 - What should guide our decisions? – Ps. 119:11; 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 12:9–21
 - Who should set the standards for our life and our very being? – Acts 15:28–29; Gal. 5:22–23; Col. 3:5–7; 1 Thess. 4:3–7
 - d. Being either the leader of the team or withdrawing from the team
 - How should we treat others? – Phil. 2:3
 - Whom should we seek to serve? – Matt. 20:25–28; 23:11; Mark 10:43–45; Luke 22:24–27; John 13:1–17; 2 Cor. 4:5; 11:8; Gal. 5:13
 2. The impact of activism (see chapter 10) – confusing doing activities in proximity with being a team
 - What forms the base for truly working together? – Amos 3:3
- C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.

VIII. **WEEK 8 – the impact of these toxins on teamwork and unity – part 2**

- A. **Examination and analysis:** examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context (including yourself) are affected by poisoning in the area of teamwork and unity. Include a description of six new brief examples (not used in the previous lesson) that illustrate this poisoning (three examples for each one of these two elements of teamwork and unity).
- B. **Biblical reflection:** identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teamwork and unity

1. The impact of activism (see chapter 10)
 - a. Confusing activity or feeling a certain emotion with productivity
 - What is truly productive? – John 6:28–29
 - Does real productivity flow from mere actions? – Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26
 - Where does true transformation, true productivity, come from? – Rom. 12:1–2
 - b. Thinking from a more pragmatic viewpoint than ethical
 - Should we live by external rules set by others or by what we consider to be convenient and expedient? – Ps. 119:11; Matt. 6:31–33; Luke 12:29–31; Acts 15:28–29; Col. 3:5–10; 1 Thess. 4:3; 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 12:9–21
 - Should we simply look for success, or are there things that we ought to be, regardless of whether they seem successful to us or not? – Gal. 5:22–25
 - c. Understanding “imitate” as reproducing activities, rather than the transformation underlying these activities
 - Is it wrong to imitate other human beings? If it is permitted, what type of person should we imitate? And what does the Bible mean when it refers to “imitating” others? – 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Cor. 8:1–7; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 2:14; Heb. 6:12; 12:1–3
 - Whom should we principally be imitating? – 1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6
2. The impact of passivity (see chapter 14)
 - a. Depending too much on others (especially the experts and team leader, but not necessarily the other team members), lacking in interdependent initiative with the other team members, being more isolated from the team process than committed to it
 - What portion of the body of Christ is important, necessary, and even indispensable (and therefore needed by us)? How should we function in the body of Christ? – Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12:12–27
 - How should we live within the body of Christ? – Col. 3:15–22
 - Where does our sufficiency and the sufficiency of others come from? Can we trust it? – 2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13
 - b. Using and possibly abusing the contributions of others (experts, professionals, clergy, team members)
 - Is it biblical to use others to help us in our growth? If so, should these individuals be used in a way that short circuits our growth? – Eph. 4:11–16
- C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.

IX. **WEEK 9 – the impact of these toxins on maturity – part 1**

- A. **Examination and analysis:** examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context (including yourself) are affected by poisoning in the area of maturity. Include a description of five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning.
- B. **Biblical reflection:** identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of maturity

1. The impact of democratized feudalism (see chapter 6) – living in the lower levels of Maslow’s pyramid
 - Are teaching, growth, and equipping important? – 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19; 1 Tim. 4:13–16; 2 Tim. 2:2, 24
 - What should be our goal with regards to maturity? – Rom. 14:19; Eph. 4:12–16
 - How should mature adults behave? – Luke 7:31–32; Eph. 4:14–15; Phil. 2:3–4
2. The impact of activism (see chapter 10)
 - a. Confusing doing activities and feeling emotions with true growth and maturity
 - Do intellectual assent and/or outward observances necessarily equate with true application and radical transformation? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; Mark 10:17–22; 2 Tim. 3:5
 - Is it possible to do the activities without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47

- Where does true character transformation come from? – Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28; Rom. 12:1–2
 - b. Being so involved in activities that we jeopardize the transformation we look for
 - Did Jesus condone being so busy doing that we don't have time to listen and change what we are? – Luke 10:38–42
 - Did Jesus call workers away from a busy ministry schedule for a while? – Mark 3:20; 6:31–32
 - Can solitude sometimes be required for spiritual strengthening? – Matt. 14:23; Luke 22:41, 43
 - c. Declaring growth and maturity based on a list of completed activities or on some emotions felt, rather than on transformed lives
 - Do intellectual assent and/or outward observances necessarily equate with true application and radical transformation? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; Mark 10:17–22; 2 Tim. 3:5
 - Is it possible to do the activities without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
 - Where does true character transformation come from? – Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28; Rom. 12:1–2
 - d. Separating the theoretical world or the emotional world from the real world
 - Should we separate the theoretical world and/or the emotional world from the real world? – Matt. 23:5–7, 14, 23, 25–27; Mark 7:6; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47; 2 Cor. 1:17–18; James 5:12
- C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position
1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
 2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
 3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
 4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.
- X. **WEEK 10 – the impact of these toxins on maturity – part 2**
- A. **Examination and analysis:** examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context (including yourself) are affected by poisoning in the area of maturity. Include a description of five new brief examples (not used in the previous lesson) that illustrate this poisoning.
- B. **Biblical reflection:** identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of maturity
1. The impact of activism (see chapter 10)
 - a. Feigning a change when it is just mere activity
 - Should we take pride in appearances or in a transformed heart? – 2 Cor. 5:12
 - Should we project illusions or false appearances? – Eph. 4:15, 25; Col. 3:9
 - What was Jesus' response to the Pharisee's projecting false images? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
 - b. Practicing a ritual and repetitive religion
 - Is a merely ritualistic and repetitive religion pleasing to God or adequate to transform our nature? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:6–10, 12–14; 2:17; 3:14–15; Matt. 6:7; 15:7–9; Mark 7:6–13
 2. The impact of passivity (see chapter 14)
 - a. Depending upon others for growth and for the solutions to life's problems, rather than attempting to solve these through an innovative and interdependent spirit
 - What portion of the body of Christ is important, necessary, and even indispensable (necessary for everyone)? Who has something to teach and who has something to learn? – Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16
 - What portion of the body of Christ has the Holy Spirit to guide them in understanding and applying biblical truths and principles? – John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13
 - Where does our sufficiency and the sufficiency of other believers come from? Can we trust it? – 2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13
 - b. Being more of an imitator than an innovator, seeing innovation as something dangerous
 - What was one of the Pharisee's biggest complaints about Jesus, with regards to their traditions? – Matt. 9:11, 14; 12:2; 15:2; Mark 2:16, 18; 2:24; 7:5; Luke 5:33; 6:2; 19:39
 - What portion of the body of Christ is important, necessary, and even indispensable (necessary for everyone)? Who has something to teach and who has something to learn? – Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16
 - What portion of the body of Christ has the Holy Spirit to guide them in understanding and applying biblical truths and principles? – John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13
 - Where does our sufficiency and the sufficiency of other believers come from? Can we trust it? – 2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13
 - c. Confusing passivity (fulfilling activities prescribed by others) with growth and maturity
 - Does doing hollow activities make us mature and pleasing to God? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:6–10, 12–14; 2:17; 3:14–15; Matt. 6:7; 15:7–9; 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–13; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
 - d. Being very loyal to our pastor, our church, and our church denomination
 - In whom should we place our trust and loyalty? – Ps. 91:2; Isa. 12:2; 26:4; 2 Cor. 1:9

- Is it biblical to depend upon others and have a form of secondary loyalty to them, as long as this does not short circuit our growth? – 1 Tim. 4:13–16; 2 Tim. 2:2, 24
- Does the fact that there should be leaders in the church nullify the equality in the body of Christ or the importance and indispensability of each and every member? Who has something to teach and who has something to learn? On whom should we depend as the body of Christ? – Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16

C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.

XI. **WEEK 11 – the impact of these toxins on teaching and discipleship – part 1**

A. **Examination and analysis:** examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context (including yourself) are affected by poisoning in the area of teaching and discipleship. Include a description of five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning.

B. **Biblical reflection:** identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teaching and discipleship

1. The impact of democratized feudalism (see chapter 6)

a. Viewing the growth of others as a threat

- Should we expect equipping and growth in the church? What should be its place? – 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:2, 24
- Who should be learning and who should be teaching? – Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:11; Gal. 5:26; Phil. 2:3–4; James 4:6–7; 1 Pet. 5:5–6
- How should we treat the growth of others? – Rom. 14:19; 15:1–2; Eph. 4:11–16

b. Teaching our bubble rather than biblical content

- What should we teach? What should we not teach? – 2 Tim. 3:16; Matt. 15:8–9; Mark 7:6–13; Titus 1:9; 2:1
- What should we do with the “old man,” our old “bubble?” – Rom. 8:12–17; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; Col. 3:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1
- Into whose image should we be transformed? That of our teacher? – Rom. 8:28–29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 3:17–19; 4:13

c. Emphasizing accomplishing activities rather than transforming lives, and announcing truths rather than applying them

- Do intellectual assent and/or outward observances necessarily equate with true application and radical transformation? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28; Mark 7:6–8; 10:17–22; 2 Tim. 3:5
- Is it possible to do the activities and theoretically believe things without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
- Where does true character transformation come from? – Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28; Rom. 12:1–2

2. The impact of activism (see chapter 10)

a. Confusing doing activities with being a good teacher or student and confusing activity or an emotion felt with having understood and applied the truth taught

- Do intellectual assent and/or outward observances necessarily equate with true application and radical transformation? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; Mark 10:17–22; 2 Tim. 3:5
- Is it possible to do the activities without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
- Where does true character transformation come from? – Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28; Rom. 12:1–2

b. Declaring growth and maturity based on a list of completed activities or on some emotions felt, rather than on transformed lives

- Do intellectual assent and/or outward observances necessarily equate with true application and radical transformation? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; Mark 10:17–22; 2 Tim. 3:5
- Is it possible to do the activities without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
- Where does true character transformation come from? – Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28; Rom. 12:1–2

C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?

4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.

XII. WEEK 12 – the impact of these toxins on teaching and discipleship – part 2

A. **Examination and analysis:** examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context (including yourself) are affected by poisoning in the area of teaching and discipleship. Include a description of five new brief examples (not used in the previous lesson) that illustrate this poisoning.

B. **Biblical reflection:** identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of teaching and discipleship

1. The impact of activism (see chapter 10)

a. Thinking that we have already changed our nature because of our behavior

- Do intellectual assent and/or outward observances necessarily equate with true application and radical transformation? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; Mark 10:17–22; 2 Tim. 3:5
- Is it possible to do the activities without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
- Where does true character transformation come from? – Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28; Rom. 12:1–2

b. Teaching backwards

- Do intellectual assent and/or outward observances necessarily equate with true application and radical transformation? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; Mark 10:17–22; 2 Tim. 3:5
- Is it possible to do the activities without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
- Where does true character transformation come from? – Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28; Rom. 12:1–2

2. The impact of passivity (see chapter 14)

a. Teaching the behavioral patterns and the bubble of others (the experts), instead of teaching and applying biblical truths and principles

- What should we teach? What should we not teach? – 2 Tim. 3:16; Matt. 15:8–9; Mark 7:6–13; Titus 1:9; 2:1
- What should we do with the “old man,” our old “bubble?” – Rom. 8:12–17; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; Col. 3:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1
- Into whose image should we be transformed? That of the experts? – Rom. 8:28–29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 3:17–19; 4:13

b. Being afraid to think in an innovative and interdependent manner

- What portion of the body of Christ is important, necessary, and even indispensable (necessary for everyone)? Who has something to teach and who has something to learn? – Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Gal. 3:28; 5:26; Col. 3:16
- What portion of the body of Christ has the Holy Spirit to guide them in understanding and applying biblical truths and principles? – John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13
- Where does our sufficiency and the sufficiency of other believers come from? Can we trust it? – 2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13

c. Preferring that our students get their instruction and information from us as teacher, rather than having the students investigate and study the Bible for themselves

- Was Paul trained to study and understand the Scriptures himself? – Acts 5:34; 22:3
- Is it important to train others so that they can study the Scriptures themselves? – 2 Tim. 2:2, 15, 24
- Why are certain individuals given to the church as pastors and teachers? Should this short circuit the learning of others? – Eph. 4:11–16
- What portion of the body of Christ has the Holy Spirit to guide them in understanding and applying biblical truths and principles? – John 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31; 10:44–45; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13
- Where does our sufficiency and the sufficiency of other believers come from? Can we trust it? – 2 Cor. 3:5–6; Phil. 4:13

C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?

2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.

3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?

4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.

XIII. WEEK 13 – the impact of these toxins on leadership

A. **Examination and analysis:** examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context (including yourself) are affected by poisoning in the area of leadership. Include a description of five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning.

B. **Biblical reflection:** identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of leadership

1. The impact of democratized feudalism (see chapter 6)

a. Providing inconsistent leadership, creating an unstable work/ministry environment, postponing making unpopular decisions, and avoiding situations that are charged with emotion, conflict, and discipline

- How consistent and steadfast should we be in key areas? – Rom. 12:11–12; 1 Cor. 15:58

- What does the fruit of the Spirit have to say about consistency and perseverance? – Gal. 5:22–23
 - Should we waver when hard times come? – 2 Cor. 6:4–10; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:3; 4:5
- b. Resisting any questioning of our authority, ability, or leadership; attacking, destroying, ridiculing, and making fun of others so that we look better; protecting our territory and vassals; and controlling, dominating, and keeping our vassals in subjection
 - How should a leader act? How should a leader treat others? How secure and flexible should a leader be in noncritical areas? – Isa. 45:9; 64:8; Jer. 18:6; Matt. 20:27; Rom. 14:1–6, 10, 13; 1 Cor. 9:19–22; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:11–12; Col. 3:12–13, 15; 1 Tim. 3:2–5; 2 Tim. 2:24–26
 - Should we fight with others to get ahead? Should our cause or our liberties be promoted to the detriment of others? – Rom. 12:18; 14:13, 19, 21; 2 Cor. 6:3; 13:11; Col. 3:8; 1 Thess. 5:13
 - Should we have private kingdoms (or ministry turf) or sacred personal goals? – Mark 9:38–40; Luke 9:49–50; John 4:34; 5:30; 20:21; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; Gal. 2:20
 - c. Sacrificing vassals when necessary for security
 - How should we live with threats and those who cause them? – 2 Cor. 6:4–13
 - d. Duplicating bubbles
 - What should we teach? What should we not teach? – 2 Tim. 3:16; Matt. 15:8–9; Mark 7:6–13; Titus 1:9; 2:1
 - What should we do with the “old man,” our old “bubble?” – Rom. 8:12–17; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; Col. 3:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1
 - Into whose image should we be transformed? That of the leader? – Rom. 8:28–29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 3:17–19; 4:13
2. The impact of activism (see chapter 10)
 - a. Confusing doing activities with being a good leader and with transforming lives
 - What is truly productive? – John 6:28–29
 - Does true character transformation, true productivity, flow from mere actions? Where does it come from? – Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26; Luke 10:38–42; Rom. 12:1–2
 - b. Declaring changes based on a list of completed activities or on an emotion felt, rather than on transformed lives
 - Do intellectual assent and/or outward observances necessarily equate with true application and radical transformation? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; Mark 10:17–22; 2 Tim. 3:5
 - Is it possible to do the activities without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
 - Where does true character transformation come from? – Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28; Rom. 12:1–2
 - c. Thinking from a more pragmatic viewpoint than ethical
 - Should we follow the opportune and efficient, or live by external rules set by another? – Ps. 119:11; Matt. 6:31–33; Luke 12:29–31; Acts 15:28–29; Col. 3:5–10; 1 Thess. 4:3; 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 12:9–21
 - Should we behave a certain way, regardless of how opportune and efficient it might seem to be? – Gal. 5:22–25
 3. The impact of passivity (see chapter 14) – expecting that our followers depend on us, be faithful to us, and serve us
 - In whom should we place our trust and loyalty? – Ps. 91:2; Isa. 12:2; 26:4; 2 Cor. 1:9
 - Is it biblical to depend upon others and have a form of secondary loyalty to them, as long as this does not short circuit our growth? – 1 Tim. 4:13–16; 2 Tim. 2:2, 24
 - Does the fact that there should be leaders in the church nullify the equality in the body of Christ or the importance and indispensability of each and every member? On whom should we depend as the body of Christ? – Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Col. 3:15–22
- C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position
1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
 2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
 3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
 4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.
- XIV. **WEEK 14 – the impact of these toxins on planning and organization**
- A. **Examination and analysis:** examine, evaluate, and briefly summarize the degree to which the people of this context (including yourself) are affected by poisoning in the area of planning and organization. Include a description of five brief examples that illustrate this poisoning.
 - B. **Biblical reflection:** identify and explain the biblical position regarding the impact of these toxins in the area of planning and organization
 1. The impact of activism (see chapter 10)
 - a. Confusing activity or emotions felt with productivity, or thinking that it doesn't matter so much what we do, just that we do something
 - Do intellectual assent and/or outward observances necessarily equate with true application and radical transformation? –

Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:10; Mark 10:17–22; 2 Tim. 3:5

- Is it possible to do the activities without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
- Where does true character transformation come from? – Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:11, 18–19; 23:25–26, 28; Rom. 12:1–2
- Is all activity of equal value, or does it matter what we do? – John 6:28–29; Luke 10:38–42

b. Making activities of greater importance than planning and organizing

- Are planning and organization important? – Matt. 7:26–27; Luke 14:28–32; Acts 6:1–4

c. Trying to reproduce activities without having previously reproduced the reality that underlies these activities and gives them meaning

- Is it possible to reproduce activities without experiencing a true transformation? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
- Does doing hollow activities make us mature and pleasing to God? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:6–10, 12–14; 2:17; 3:14–15; Matt. 6:7; 15:7–9; 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–13; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
- What did Jesus think of the Pharisees who did hollow activities with no real substance undergirding them? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47

d. Thinking from a more pragmatic viewpoint than ethical

- Should we live by external rules developed by another, or simply follow what we think to be the best or what seemingly will bring us the greatest success? – Ps. 119:11; Matt. 6:31–33; Luke 12:29–31; Acts 15:28–29; Col. 3:5–10; 1 Thess. 4:3; 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 12:9–21
- Should we live a certain way, regardless of how successful it might seem to us? – Gal. 5:22–25

e. Lacking stability and focus

- Should we follow whichever path happens to offer the greatest success in the moment, or should we be more steadfast and perseverant? – Luke 8:15; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 15:58; Col. 1:23; 2 Thess. 1:4; 2 Pet. 1:5–7

2. The impact of passivity (see chapter 14)

a. Imitating activities that belong to imported programs, but without understanding the reality that underlies and gives meaning to these activities and programs

- Do hollow activities with no true substance undergirding them please God? – Isa. 29:13; Mal. 1:6–10, 12–14; 2:17; 3:14–15; Matt. 6:7; 15:7–9; 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–13; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47

b. Lacking an adequate base for the successful implementation of a program

- What was Jesus' response to the Pharisees who did hollow activities with no real substance undergirding them? – Matt. 23:2–7, 14, 23–28, 33; Mark 7:6–9; Luke 11:39; 13:15; 20:46–47
- Does a successful venture require a firm base? – Matt. 7:26–27; Luke 14:28–32

C. **Application:** examine and evaluate what needs to be transformed in their own life in order to better implement the corrections suggested by this biblical position

1. In light of these biblical truths and principles, what should you transform (eliminate, change, or add) in your thinking, your worldview, your daily living, and your ministry participation?
2. Briefly summarize the general transformation that these Bible passages want to bring to your life.
3. Of the Bible passages that you have studied, were there any that impacted you in a special way? If so, which ones were they, and what was their special impact?
4. Explain how you could go about sharing this information with others so that they also can be freed from the impact of these toxins.

XV. **WEEK 15 – an illustration of the impact of these toxins in conflict management and resolution**

- A. Study, analyze, and briefly summarize the general degree to which the people of this context (including yourself) are affected by poisoning in the area of conflict detection and management (in other words, the patient is to give their general appraisal of this poisoning)
- B. Identify, analyze, and briefly describe five varied illustrations of this poisoning (these illustrations should include a variety of responsible toxins and a variety of areas impacted) – please note that the patient may base a maximum of three of their five illustrations in the impacts mentioned in the handout covering conflict detection and management, but they should also come up with a minimum of two new illustrations (detected, identified, and analyzed by this patient on their own)
- C. Then compare their five illustrations with the previous lessons of this detox program where antidote suggestions are offered for these different toxins and areas, and create an effective antidote to counteract each one of these five illustrations (their antidote should contain a minimum of two Bible portions or two groups of Bible portions for each illustration) – please note that this lesson is not limited only to the Bible portions mentioned in the previous lessons, but rather the patient is permitted to use any Bible portion that offers to counteract the toxic effects shown in their illustration

XVI. **WEEK 16** – no planned homework assignment

XVII. **WEEK 17** (if necessary) – no planned homework assignment

Appendix 6

How to prepare for and lead a detox support group

The detox program's medical personnel have the responsibility of leading the detox support groups. As such, they are there to facilitate the recovery, growth, and maturity of their patients. They provide any necessary *guidance* and *help*, without diminishing the patient's responsibility for participating in the detox process, and without lording it over these patients or this process.

In order to be a good specialist, doctor, nurse, or assistant, it is important that the medical personnel satisfy the following four conditions.

1. Be free from poisoning

These toxins are so dangerous and powerful that they destroy our ability to help others if we ourselves are poisoned. Therefore, it is important that the medical personnel not suffer from significant levels of poisoning. This may be achieved by having them go through a detox program similar to this one prior to their acceptance as medical staff, or by using people who demonstrate a natural resistance to the effects of these three toxins. *It is important to note that if this condition is not met, there will be a serious risk of transmitting the poisons through contagion rather than healing the patients.*

2. Read and study this manual

This book is the medical manual for the treatment of these toxins. As such, it contains a wealth of important information for the medical personnel. It should be used as a reference manual to be consulted frequently for information. Together with the Bible, this book should be taken to all the detox support group meetings.

3. Follow the plans suggested in appendices 3, 4, and 5

Appendices 3, 4, and 5 contain the general plans for the entire detox program. The medical personnel should follow these plans (with certain

flexibility allowed) in leading their detox support groups.

Appendix 3 – general plan. Appendix 3 contains the general plan for the entire detox program, divided into 16 or 17 weekly meetings of two hours. If a support group uses another time frame or frequency for their meetings, then this plan will need to be adjusted to reflect this.

Appendix 3 – pedagogical summary. Each meeting's individual sub-plan begins with a pedagogical summary. This includes the general topic for the meeting, the key skills to be developed or focused on, the general instructional objectives for the informative presentation portion of the meeting, and the general learning objectives for the homework and the discussion time. The medical personnel should use the instructional objectives to guide in the preparation and focus of their talks, and they should use the learning objectives to guide and measure the patient's learning.

Appendices 3, 4, and 5 – required materials. Next, appendices 3, 4, and 5 describe the materials required for each meeting. These materials usually are handed out to the patients during the corresponding support group meeting.

The *informational handout* forms the permanent, take-home copy of the written information that each patient needs to receive. Appendix 4 lists the general content for each meeting's handout. Usually, this handout is a simplified, easy-to-understand version of the corresponding content found in this medical manual. The informative presentation portion of the meeting introduces the handout's general topic, elaborates on it, and provides illustrations. The patients follow along and take notes in their copy of the handout. Later, during the week, the patients reread their handout, go over their notes, and answer their homework assignment based upon this content.

The *homework sheet* contains the questions that the patient should study and answer during

the week, and then bring to the next meeting, prepared to discuss the subject with their small group. Appendix 5 contains the general homework content for each meeting, focusing especially on the basic questions and the key Bible verses that help develop a biblical answer for each question. *Please note that analyzing what the Bible has to say about these questions is crucial to developing an effective biblical antidote for these toxins.* Also, appendix 2 provides a sample of two different homework assignments. When the medical personnel design their homework sheets, they are free to use the questions and verses listed in appendix 5, or they may add other questions and verses that also are applicable to their particular group context. And they may reduce the list by selecting only the most pertinent and useful questions and verses, if there is a danger of overloading the patients with homework.

IMPORTANT: please note that it is not necessary for the medical staff to develop *different* handouts and homework sheets for *every* support group. If the general context of the group shares enough similarities to allow using handouts and homework sheets already prepared for another group, it is perfectly all right to do so. The important thing is that the handouts and homework sheets *speak* to the context of the patients in the group. If contexts are similar, then sheets may be reused. However, if the group's context is such that no existing handout or homework sheet is truly applicable, then the medical personnel have the freedom and the responsibility to develop new handouts and homework sheets that are more pertinent to their particular context. Additionally, if the medical personnel desire, the handouts could be assembled into a small workbook that could be handed to the patients at the beginning of the detox program. This would avoid distributing handouts each week, and give the patients a more permanent storage system for their handouts.

Appendix 3 – discussion time. Normally, the meetings will begin (after an opening prayer requesting the guidance of the Holy Spirit) with a discussion time where the patients, under the encouragement of the medical staff, discuss what they have learned in their studies and how they may best apply this to their lives. Therefore, the medical staff must be prepared to lead and facilitate this discussion. Normally, this will include reading about and studying the topic to be covered (usually the topic assigned for the *previous* week, since a new topic is introduced one week, it is studied during the week, and then discussed the

following week). *Please note that this manual provides the central truth focused on by each group of Bible verses in appendix 5, thus making it easier to prepare for leading and focusing these discussion times.* At the end of the discussion time, the patients should hand in their completed homework sheets to the medical staff for correction and returning, and for assessing the group's progress. Please note that the homework is handed in *after* the discussion time, thus allowing the patients to refer to their answers during the discussion.

Appendix 3 – informative presentation. Following the discussion time comes the informative presentation. Here, the medical staff distribute the handouts (or indicate the pages of the workbook), and then introduce the new topic for this meeting and for the rest of the week. Therefore, the medical staff should prepare themselves by reading the corresponding portions of this manual and the information contained in the meeting's handout. This informative presentation should not only introduce and explain the topic, but also encourage the patients to ask questions and make observations that help clarify the topic.

Appendix 3 – explaining the homework. Normally, the meetings end with handing out the new homework sheets for study during the week. The medical personnel should give a brief explanation of the steps involved in the homework (see suggestions in appendix 3), and should answer any questions that the patients may have.

Sample schedule for a meeting. The meetings normally follow a schedule similar to this.

- ◆ Open the meeting with prayer
- ◆ Discussion time
- ◆ Turn in completed homework sheets
- ◆ Distribute handouts
- ◆ Informative presentation
- ◆ Hand out new homework sheets
- ◆ Explain the homework
- ◆ Close the meeting with prayer

4. Be very flexible and sensitive

The medical staff always needs to be flexible and sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading. To a certain degree, poisoning tends to be particular and individual, varying from one patient to another. As part of their supervision of the detox program, the medical staff will need to adapt this program to the personal needs of each patient. The Holy Spirit will guide in this process.

Appendix 7

The training of the medical staff

As chapter 17 mentioned, there are three general levels of medical staff. First are the *nurses and assistants* that make up the most basic level of this personnel. These are individuals with basic training and abilities that equip them to treat all the general facets of these toxins. Second are the *doctors* that make up the intermediate level. These are individuals with more advanced training and abilities that equip them to more thoroughly treat all the facets of these toxins. And third are the *specialists* that form the highest level of medical staff. These are individuals with special training and abilities that equip them especially to treat certain facets of these toxins, while also being equipped to treat all the other facets. Given these three levels of equipping and abilities, how are these individuals trained?

Nurses and assistants. The nurses and assistants normally are trained in two phases. The first phase is made up of going through a detox program similar to the one described in this text. This phase has two basic functions: free the future medical staff of their poisoning, and give them a deep, first-hand knowledge of the detox process. After completing this program comes the second phase of their training. This is made up of carefully reading and studying this medical manual, and of going through a brief (four to six hours) seminar with a doctor or specialist. This seminar is focused on four broad goals: 1) provide a detailed description of the detox program and its functioning, 2) summarize and highlight the underlying historical and religious factors that cause the general populace to have a higher sensitivity to these toxins, 3) explain the vital importance and underlying function of the three liberties and the spiritual life that moderates them, and 4) cover any questions the group may have. With this base, the nurses and assistants can begin to function as basic medical personnel in the program.

And what makes the difference between a nurse and an assistant? Basically, it depends upon their abilities and degree of dedication to the detox program. An assistant may lack certain abilities that are normally required, and still assist other medical personnel in the program. This means that an assistant oftentimes is not adequately equipped to function alone. Rather, he or she always assists another. An assistant also can be a person who can only help out during a *portion* of the detox program. In this case, he or she is an assistant because the program cannot be completed relying on their help. On the other hand, nurses possess both the necessary abilities and dedication to lead a support group on their own.

Doctors. Doctors normally receive their equipping through their participation in the detox program. In other words, their *experience* in treating poisoned individuals trains them to be doctors. Thus, a majority of them actually begin as nurses, and by successfully leading several support groups they gain the experience necessary to become doctors.

Specialists. Specialists normally begin as doctors, but they also have gone through some additional special and concentrated study of some facet of the detox program. For example, they might do additional study of certain biblical portions of the antidote. Or they might study certain factors that are important to understanding a group's poisoning (such as historical factors, religious factors, psychological factors, sociological factors, etc.). Or they might study the three liberties and spiritual life that underlie this whole program. These are only a few of the *multitude* of options available for additional study. And this additional study makes this person a valuable resource for the program, and gives them certain additional abilities in their area of specialty.

Appendix 8

List of common symptoms, by toxin and area affected

I. TOXIN: DEMOCRATIZED FEUDALISM

A. **General** symptoms and symptoms dealing with **evaluation and correction**

1. The person behaves as a feudal lord.
2. The person is independent, individualistic, and inflexible.
3. The person is egocentric and self-sufficient.
4. The person forms and follows their own individualistic and sovereign version of the truth.
5. The person does not willingly submit to evaluation and correction.
6. The person desires to lead, teach, and lord it over others, rather than learn, listen, and serve.
7. The person does not truly resolve their feelings of inferiority and insecurity.

B. Symptoms dealing with **interpersonal relations**

1. The person does not need nor accept the help of others.
2. The person seeks to obligate God and others to respect this individual's lordship.
3. The person prefers to live isolated from the rest.
4. The person desires to lead, teach, and lord it over others, rather than learn, listen, and serve.
5. The person expects that their vassals depend upon him or her, are loyal to them, and serve them.
6. The person lives as if their vassals (those who work under their supervision) existed for the personal benefit of this individual.
7. The person, as feudal lord, has the right to seize or "expropriate" the efforts and successes of their vassals.
8. The person attempts to hide their sins and errors.
9. The person, when threatened, becomes fairly intolerant.
10. The person is easily offended, especially if they think that their sovereignty and autonomy are not being adequately respected.
11. The person operates under a mixture of independence and dependence.
12. The person avoids interdependence, and does not think in an interdependent way.

C. Symptoms dealing with **teamwork and unity**

1. The person does not need nor accept the help of others.
2. The person does not yield to form a united group.
3. The person prefers to work isolated from the rest.
4. The person forms and follows their own individualistic and sovereign version of the team's vision and mission statements, team plan, etc.
5. The person feels little commitment to the team, resulting in apathy and stagnation.
6. The person, instead of feeling strongly united with their team members, only feels tolerant of them.
7. The person either will try to rise quickly to the position of team leader, or they will withdraw from the team.
8. The person, as a feudal lord, exercises their right to seize or "expropriate" the efforts and successes of their team members.
9. The person does not plan on following a job description.
10. The person expects a job evaluation to focus more on their dependency on, loyalty to, and service to their leader, rather than on their performance.
11. The person does not expect continuity.
12. The person avoids long-range planning and formation of strategies.
13. The person does not really expect ministries to be permanent or long-lasting.
14. The person has a very pragmatic bent.

15. The person will work as “economically” as possible.
- D. Symptoms dealing with **leadership**
1. The person desires to lead, teach, and lord it over others, rather than learn, listen, and serve.
 2. The person is very insecure and does not tolerate any questioning of their authority, ability, leadership, etc.
 3. The person attacks, destroys, ridicules, and makes fun of other leaders so that this individual may appear to be the best leader.
 4. The person tends to avoid unpopular decisions and situations charged with emotions, conflict, and discipline.
 5. The person tends to live from crisis to crisis.
 6. The person creates an environment of instability so that they become indispensable.
 7. The person develops an inconsistent leadership.
 8. The person strongly protects their territory (their ministry) and their vassals (those who work under them).
 9. The person controls, dominates, and maintains their vassals in subjection.
 10. The person expects that their vassals depend upon him or her, are loyal to them, and serve them.
 11. The person is willing to sacrifice their vassals if this will contribute to this individual’s security.
- E. Symptoms dealing with **teaching and discipleship**
1. The person sees the growth of others as a threat.
 2. The person can punish students who grow too much.
 3. The person leans more toward teaching their personal behavioral patterns and those of their bubble than biblical principles and content.
 4. The person seeks to clone their bubble and place it over their students.
 5. The person emphasizes the accomplishment of activities rather than the transformation of lives.
 6. The person is content with the announcement of truths instead of their application.
 7. The person runs the risk of teaching backwards.
- F. Symptoms dealing with **maturity**
1. The person does not admit their faults, lacks and needs, and they hide their sins and their errors.
 2. The person does not permit evaluations and corrections that are necessary for their growth.
 3. The person does not truly resolve their feelings of inferiority and insecurity.
 4. The person behaves as an immature feudal lord.

II. TOXIN: ACTIVISM

- A. **General** symptoms
1. The person confuses activity with productivity.
 2. The person focuses on doing instead of being.
 3. The person confuses experiencing success in their activities with receiving God’s blessing.
 4. The person experiences burnout, stagnation, and frustration.
- B. Symptoms dealing with **teamwork and unity**
1. The person confuses doing activities in geographical proximity with working as a team.
 2. The person has a more pragmatic viewpoint than ethical.
- C. Symptoms dealing with **leadership**
1. The person confuses doing activities with being a good leader.
 2. The person confuses doing activities with transforming lives.
 3. The person officially declares that the desired transformations have been achieved, based upon a list of accomplished activities.
 4. The person is a more pragmatic leader than ethical.
 5. The person is an unstable leader and lacks focus.
- D. Symptoms dealing with **planning and organization**
1. The person confuses doing activities in planning and organization with being productive in these areas.
 2. The person decides which activity to do based upon seemingly confusing criteria.
 3. The person tends to be more pragmatic than ethical.
 4. The person lacks stability and focus.
 5. The person emphasizes doing activities instead of planning and organizing.
 6. The person defines “imitate” as reproducing activities.
 7. The person tends to lack an adequate base for implementing a program with success.
- E. Symptoms dealing with **teaching and discipleship**

1. The person confuses doing activities and feeling emotions with comprehending and applying the truths taught.
 2. The person confuses doing activities and feeling emotions with a genuine transformation of their nature and being.
 3. The person focuses more on the accomplishment of activities than on the transformation of lives.
 4. The person focuses more on the announcement of truths than on their application.
 5. The person officially declares, with certificates and diplomas, that the desired transformations have been achieved, based upon a list of accomplished activities.
 6. The person tends to accept an immature Christian character, as long as the person in reference has accomplished the appropriate activities.
 7. The person tends to teach backwards.
- F. Symptoms dealing with **maturity**
1. The person confuses doing activities and feeling emotions with true growth and maturity.
 2. The person declares growth and maturity, based upon a list of accomplished activities or emotions that the person in reference has felt.
 3. The person separates the theoretical and emotional worlds from the real world, emphasizing the theoretical and emotional worlds.
 4. The person blames themselves, feels regret, and does all sorts of penance due to their lack of commitment to maturity.
 5. The person practices a ritual and repetitive religion.

III. **TOXIN: PASSIVITY**

- A. **General** symptoms
1. The person takes advantage of or “expropriates” the achievements, contributions, and merits of others.
 2. The person depends heavily on others for the achievement of their goals.
 3. The person feels a strong sense of inferiority.
 4. The person feels a strong sense of insecurity.
 5. The person feels a strong sense of apathy and/or stagnation.
 6. The person practices a ritual and “indirect” religion.
- B. Symptoms dealing with **interpersonal relations**
1. The person takes advantage of or “expropriates” the achievements, contributions, and merits of those serving under them.
 2. The person depends heavily on those who serve under them for the achievement of their goals.
 3. The person is neither innovative nor entrepreneurial, unless they are the lord of the context.
 4. The person expects that those working under them be neither innovative nor entrepreneurial.
 5. The person develops a concept of “body life” that is hierarchical, dependent, loyal, and servile.
- C. Symptoms dealing with **teamwork and unity**
1. The person depends heavily upon others, especially the team leader and other experts.
 2. The person lacks an interdependent, innovative spirit.
 3. The person uses and abuses the efforts and achievements of others.
 4. The person is more isolated from the team process than committed to it.
- D. Symptoms dealing with **leadership**
1. The person bases their position as leader upon the merits and achievements of others.
 2. The person expects that those who serve under them will depend upon them, be loyal to them, and serve them faithfully.
- E. Symptoms dealing with **planning and organization**
1. The person uses plans and programs developed by others, many times living in other contexts.
 2. The person implements these plans and programs by focusing on imitating the appropriate behavioral patterns (actions and activities) associated with these plans and programs.
 3. The person lacks an adequate base for successfully implementing these programs and plans.
 4. The person feels a strong sense of stagnation and eventually apathy.
- F. Symptoms dealing with **teaching and discipleship**
1. The person teaches the behavioral patterns and the bubble of others (the experts), instead of teaching and applying biblical truths and principles.
 2. This person does not teach in an interdependent and innovative fashion.
 3. This person prefers that their students receive instruction and information directly from them as teacher, instead of equipping these students to investigate, analyze, and apply the Bible themselves.

G. Symptoms dealing with **maturity**

1. The person depends upon others for his or her growth and maturity.
2. This person is more of an imitator than an innovator.
3. This person sees innovation as a dangerous activity.
4. This person misses out on the growth that comes through developing and implementing their own programs and plans.
5. This person confuses passive activity (fulfilling activities prescribed by others) with growth and maturity.
6. This person is strongly loyal to their pastor, their church, and their church denomination.

Appendix 9

An illustration of the impact of these toxins: conflict detection and management

The common practice of detecting and managing conflicts can be used to illustrate how and to what extent these toxins can impact daily life in Latin America.⁴⁹

The detection of conflicts

We'll begin our illustration with an analysis of how people in this context detect or communicate the existence of a conflict. Normally, there are four "tracks" or options that these people have at their disposal for the communication of a conflict. The diagram below illustrates these options.

In the first option, one person comes to communicate their problem or conflict, and the other withdraws in order not to be able to hear of the existence of the problem or conflict. This option is called "mixed responses," and society generally does not consider it to be a truly acceptable option.

The second option is called "separation." Here, neither person comes to present their problem or conflict. Rather, each one refuses to communicate about the existence of the problem, many times blaming the other ("seeing as how I know that they won't listen to me, why should I bother trying to tell them about the problem?"). Once again, society generally does not consider this to be a truly acceptable option.

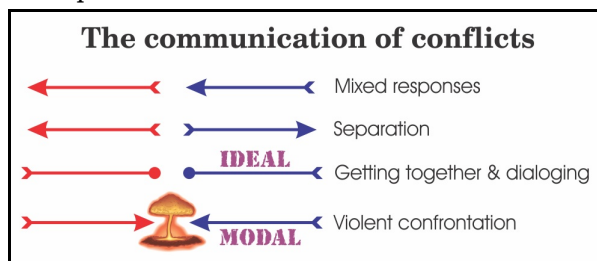
The third option is called "getting together and dialoging." Here, both people get together, they sit down at a table, and they dialog about the problem. This allows the one person to present their problem and it allows the other to detect

(recognize) the existence and content of this problem. Generally, society identifies this option as the ideal way of handling the situation, and it is thus identified in the diagram.

Unfortunately, although society recognizes certain behavioral traits as *ideal*, many times what it actually *does* (and even expects) in the day-to-day real world is something very different. This real world behavior that society actually practices is referred to as the "modal" behavior. For example, traffic laws, stop lights, maximum vehicle speeds, and other similar elements frequently express what society considers to be the *ideal* (drive carefully, come to a complete stop at a red light and then wait until it turns green, do not exceed the maximum posted speed, only pass on the left, etc.). But society's actual, day-to-day real world behavior expresses what it accepts as the *modal*. And typical driving habits can illustrate just how far the modal can be from the ideal.

Therefore, in this diagram there is a fourth option that is quite common in society's daily behavior, and it is therefore labeled as the modal behavior. This option is called "violent confrontation." Here, one person comes to present their problem and the other comes to deny the existence of that problem. They do not really come together to dialog. Nor do they come together to talk things out. They don't even come together to determine whose opinion is closest to the truth. Rather, they come together to fight, and to communicate through violence the existence of a problem or lack thereof (one party willing to fight to prove that the problem *exists*, the other willing to fight to prove that the problem does *not* exist). And it is not rare that people are wounded and even killed in these confrontations.

So, in this fourth option, if I don't burn tires, throw stones, destroy buildings, block traffic, etc., then I am not really communicating that I have a problem. And when society becomes accustomed to



this modal behavior, if I *don't* cause a violent explosion, then society figures that I don't really have a serious problem to communicate. When this happens (when society becomes accustomed to this modal behavior), then this society basically has gotten to the point where it is blind and deaf to any nonviolent communication of problems. And thus it leaves me no option to communicate my problem without some sort of violent explosion.

Now it ought to be fairly clear that this modal behavior is very damaging to teamwork, to work in the local church, to work in missions, etc. *Explosions are destructive*. They destroy what we have built. They reduce our achievements to ashes.

The toxins and the detection of conflicts

How do these toxins impact this process of detection and communication of problems and conflicts?

Democratized feudalism. Democratized feudalism, with its rigid and impenetrable bubble, its emphasis on sovereignty, autonomy, and individualism, and its isolation of the person inside their bubble, has a very large impact on this process.

◆ *A lack of getting together.* The rigidity of the bubble does not really lead to getting together. Two rigid spheres cannot occupy the same space. Also, the isolation of the bubble doesn't lead to getting together. And its emphasis on its owner's sovereignty, autonomy, and individualism tends to work against getting together. In fact, getting together threatens to weaken the sovereignty, autonomy and individualism of all participants involved. Why? Because they come together as *equals*, expecting to voluntarily *give up* part of their rights in order to achieve something greater. All of this kind of thinking goes directly against the feudal sovereignty, autonomy, and individualism of the bubble.

◆ *A lack of dialoging.* The rigidity and impenetrability of the bubble are not conducive to dialog. Also, its emphasis on its owner's sovereignty, autonomy, and individualism hampers dialog. And its emphasis on being a strong feudal lord blocks dialog. According to the bubble, only the weak dialog. The strong impose their will upon others. Remember the words of Octavio Paz, "the only thing that matters is manliness, the personal courage that enables an individual to assert themselves and their authority over others."⁵⁰

◆ *The option of separation is not viable.* In separation, someone has to give up their right to being

heard. Someone has to be content with not communicating their problem. From a feudal point of view, this person is a loser, and no bubble owner wants to be a loser.

◆ *The option of mixed responses also is not viable.* Once again, someone does not have the opportunity to present their problem. The person who flees takes this right away from the other. From a feudal point of view, this is unacceptable.

◆ *Confrontation is the only viable option.* Only confrontation allows both parties to maintain their sovereignty, autonomy, individualism, and their other rights as feudal lords.

◆ *The confrontation will be over a disagreement.* Due to its emphasis on the individualism, sovereignty, and autonomy of its owner, each bubble is *unique* and *different* from the rest, and it announces its uniqueness and difference with a very loud voice. Among other things, it does this to affirm its sovereignty and autonomy, and to make sure that the rest respect its right to be different. Unfortunately, a consequence of all of this is that there *always* will be disagreements between bubbles, and these bubbles will always tend to highlight and underscore these disagreements.

◆ *The confrontation will be conflictive.* Since the bubble is rigid and impenetrable, no one has to yield (nor should they). Thus, all disagreements, even small semantic ones, tend to generate a certain degree of conflict.

◆ *The confrontation will be violent.* Since neither party can yield without losing their sovereignty, autonomy, and individualism, and since both parties tend to want to impose their will upon others as feudal lords, the confrontation basically will be violent.

◆ *The communication and validation of the problem or conflict will occur within the context of a feudal tournament and will employ a form of trial by combat.* These feudal lords will use jousts and other feudal forms of fighting to communicate their problems and conflicts. However, this process goes beyond mere *communication*, because these jousts and fights also serve to *validate* the individual's position with regard to their problem or conflict. This is done through a form of trial by combat, where the one who is in the right is determined by who wins the joust or other form of fighting (God upholds the righteous person by granting them the victory). Therefore, it is important not only that the confrontation occur, so that they can communicate their problem, but it is also vital that they come out the "winner." Otherwise, there has been no validation of their claim.

Activism. Activism predisposes the people to believe that if they do the right activities, then

they magically will become what they want to be. It also predisposes them to separate the real world from the theoretical world and emotions, thinking that if the appropriate theoretical activities are achieved (or if the correct emotions are felt), then the real world will magically line up with this theoretical or emotional “reality.” And activism predisposes the people to be more pragmatic than ethical.

◆ *The option of getting together and dialoging is praised and even requested by the people, but no one really expects that it will be accomplished.* As an ideal approved by society, all praise this option and even request that the parties involved use it. But everyone knows that ideals belong to the distant theoretical world, and that the real world is something quite different. Therefore, in spite of requesting the ideal, in the day-to-day real world these people really *expect* the modal (a violent confrontation). And no one is surprised when it happens.

◆ *It is felt that, by performing the activities of coming to a table and sitting down together, getting together and dialoging magically will be achieved.* True getting together and dialoging are based on something much deeper than mere geographical proximity. But activism has problems understanding this.

◆ *It is felt that, by feeling certain emotions while seated around a table, getting together and dialoging magically will be achieved.* True getting together and dialoging are based on something much deeper than mere emotional feelings. But activism has problems understanding this, too.

◆ *That which is opportune is sought after more than that which is correct, so the people choose the option of a violent confrontation.* Based upon a mentality that is more pragmatic than ethical, the people look more for the shortest route to their desired destination than for the correct route (even when their own ideals tell them that a *different* route than the one they are considering is “correct”). Thus, they prefer a violent confrontation because it offers a rapid solution for their situation.

Passivity. Passivity predisposes the people to mechanically duplicate plans and programs, thinking that by copying these they will also copy the success that these plans and programs have had in other contexts. It also predisposes them to use others (the professionals) in the achievement of their desired goals. And it predisposes the people to feel a strong dependence on and loyalty to their leaders.

◆ *Plans and programs for getting together and dialoging that have been successful in other con-*

texts are duplicated here, expecting also to copy their success. Unfortunately, their success is not based upon the mere implementation of these plans and programs, but rather on the paradigm and worldview (lifestyle) that underlie and give meaning to these plans and programs. But passivity has problems understanding this.

◆ *The responsibility for getting together and dialoging is turned over to the experts and professionals.* The common, average person does not really feel this responsibility. It is something best left to the professionals. Therefore, they do not intend nor expect to do it themselves. Rather, they contract others to do it for them. Regrettably, this is not the way to *learn* to get together and dialog.

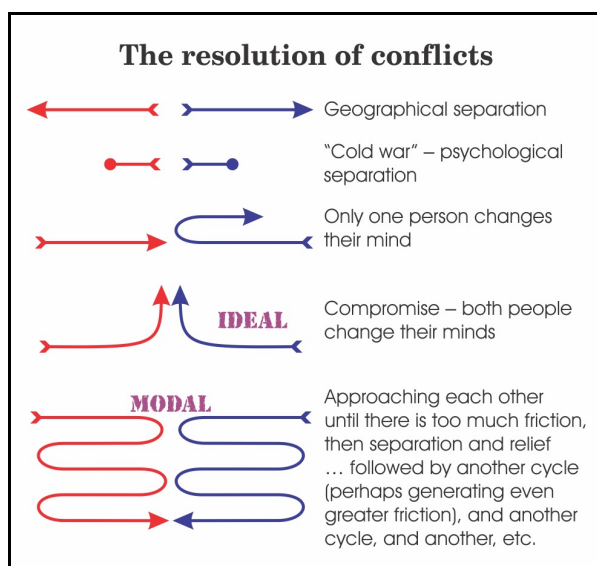
◆ *If their leaders abandon the process of getting together and dialoging, the people almost automatically will abandon it as well.* Their dependency on and loyalty to these leaders prevents these people from acting in a more independent fashion. And, since their leaders tend to come from the more feudal portion of the population (because this group is seen as the most likely to provide suitable leaders), and since feudalism tends not to accept getting together and dialoging (as we have already seen), then these leaders probably will frequently abandon this process of getting together and dialoging. Furthermore, the other two options of “mixed responses” and “separation” don’t really tend to be all that acceptable to these feudal leaders either (as was seen before). Thus, the people will tend to follow their leaders toward a violent confrontation, and they will tend to loyally support these leaders in this confrontation.

The resolution and management of conflicts

Now we will continue our illustration with an analysis of how society resolves or manages conflicts, once they have been communicated and validated. In this area, there normally are five options available, as the following diagram illustrates.

In the first option, called “geographical separation,” neither of the two parties really try to *resolve* their conflict. Rather, each one either denies having a conflict or refuses to treat it. But, since this conflict is *associated* with another person, a geographical separation is employed so that the physical presence of this other person doesn’t bring this conflict to mind. Generally, society does not consider this option to be truly acceptable. Instead of treating the problem, it just avoids it.

The second option, called “cold war or psychological separation,” is very similar to the first, except that there is no need to move to another



part of the country. With this second option, the two parties simply ignore the existence of the other. They separate as much as possible (seeking schedules that avoid unnecessary encounters in common locations like banks and stores, they cross the street or walk an additional block to avoid meeting when they are downtown, etc.), but without going to the extremes of the first option. Once again, these parties are trying to forget the problem by ignoring it, rather than treating it. Society generally does not consider this option to be truly acceptable either.

In the third option, one of the two parties does a complete about face and radically changes their mind. They admit that they were completely wrong and that the other person was completely right. Although society accepts this option under certain circumstances (for example, when the person that changes their mind has been guilty of breaking a key general societal norm), it isn't really popular for reasons that we will see shortly. We should also mention that this option *does* resolve the problem or conflict.

The fourth option represents what society generally considers to be the ideal. This is the option of compromise, where both parties yield some and change their ideas some, thus coming into agreement through these changes. Each one is partially flexible and bends the direction of their "arrow," but without drastically doubling it over (as with the third option). We should also mention that this option *does* resolve the problem or conflict.

The fifth option represents the modal, or the response that this society frequently employs, and it is rather complex. Here we begin with the two parties approaching each other, as if they were going to achieve a compromise, but neither one yields or changes direction. Therefore, this

approaching of one another actually is leading to a violent collision of wills. But, the closer they get, the more friction and tension this closeness generates, producing a sharp sense of discomfort that grows the more that they approach each other, until eventually the two parties have to break off and withdraw due to their levels of discomfort. *But the problem has not been resolved.* In fact, it has hardly even been treated. So this lack of resolution begins to generate its own friction and tension, which grows until it is great enough to change the direction of the arrows and head the two parties back toward each other and another collision. But once again, the closer they get, the more friction and tension they feel. And if the price of a violent collision is high enough, this friction and tension will lead the two groups to separate again. But sooner or later, the pressure and tension of the unresolved conflict will turn the two parties back toward another encounter, which will be aborted when the friction and tension caused by their growing closeness become great enough.

And these cycles will continue one after another after another, *but with a slight modification.* Since the pressure of the unresolved problem or conflict tends to *grow* with time, it also tends to push the two groups closer and closer to a collision with each cycle. In other words, each cycle tends to require a *greater* degree of closeness to generate a *greater* degree of friction and tension to be able to overcome the *increased* pressure caused by the continued unresolved conflict, and thus cause the two parties to withdraw before a collision and/or explosion. But sooner or later, the two groups will get too close, and there will be a small collision and violent confrontation (many times with some tally of wounded or dead). After this event, which seems to serve to vent the pressure and tension, the two groups generally withdraw for a period of rest and relief. But, seeing as how the conflict is still unresolved, the level of pressure begins to build again, and the two groups begin to approach each other once more ... and this whole process begins anew. We should also mention here that this option does not truly resolve the problem or conflict (at least not without an open war and the elimination of one of the two parties).

The toxins and conflict management

How do these toxins impact this process of conflict management?

Democratized feudalism. Democratized feudalism, with its rigid and impenetrable bubble, its emphasis on sovereignty, autonomy, and indi-

vidualism, and its isolation of the person inside their bubble, has a very large impact on this process.

◆ *The option of geographical separation is not seen as very viable.* In this separation, someone has to yield their right to have their problem resolved. Someone has to be content with “swallowing” their problem. From a feudal point of view, this person is a loser, and no bubble owner wants to be a loser.

◆ *The “cold war” option also is not seen as very viable.* For the same reasons just mentioned, the “cold war” option does not present a very viable solution for someone suffering from democratized feudalism.

◆ *The option where only one person changes their mind is acceptable when there has been a serious violation of societal norms.* But apart from this scenario, this option represents an open violation of this individual’s sovereignty and autonomy (by requiring them to drastically change), and this is quite unacceptable to democratized feudalism, unless it is the feudal lord who does not change, and it is the vassal that does the complete about face (thus coming into alignment with their lord).

◆ *The option of compromise isn’t really that acceptable either.* This option requires that both parties yield some of their sovereignty, autonomy, and individualism. A feudal lord will do this only when he or she has very good reasons (for example, under the pressure of other, greater lords, or when the reward is great enough to justify the price of yielding).

◆ *The road to confrontation generally is seen as the most viable option.* Only this option allows both parties to maintain their sovereignty, autonomy, and individualism, as well as their other rights as feudal lords.

◆ *The isolation of the person inside their bubble allows them to withstand high amounts of pressure and friction.* Protected by their bubble and fed by their sovereignty and autonomy, this person can withstand incredible amounts of pressure and friction, thus allowing the fifth option (cycles of confrontation) to function with minimal personal wear and tear. Furthermore, this person is accustomed to the friction generated by the continual rubbing and jostling of rigid bubbles, so putting up with a little bit more is not such a big thing.

Activism. As we have seen, activism predisposes the people to believe that if they do the right activities, then they magically will become what they want to be. It also predisposes them to separate the real world from the theoretical world and emotions, thinking that if the appropriate theoretical activities are achieved (or if the correct emo-

tions are felt), then the real world will magically line up with this theoretical or emotional “reality.” And activism also predisposes the people to be more pragmatic than ethical.

◆ *The option of compromise is praised and even requested by the people, but no one really expects to achieve it.* As the ideal approved by society, everyone praises the option of compromise, and they even request that the parties involved use this option to resolve their conflict. But everyone knows that ideals belong to a distant theoretical world, and that the real world is very different. Therefore, in spite of requesting the ideal on the theoretical plane, the people really expect the modal on the real plane. And no one is surprised when the two parties follow the modal. It’s only what they expected.

◆ *It is felt that, by doing the activities of talking about and planning for a compromise, this compromise will somehow magically be achieved.* True getting together and dialog (steps necessary for true compromise) are based upon something much deeper than mere talking and planning. But activism has problems understanding this.

◆ *It is felt that, by feeling a certain emotion while talking about or planning for a compromise, this compromise will somehow magically be achieved.* True getting together and dialog are based upon something much deeper than mere emotions. But activism has problems understanding this, too.

◆ *That which is opportune is sought after more than that which is correct, so the people choose the option that offers to be the shortest route to their desired goal.* Based upon a mentality that is more pragmatic than ethical, the people look more for the shortest route to their desired destination than for the correct route (even when their own ideals tell them that a *different* route than the one they are considering is “correct”). Thus, they prefer to run the risk of a sporadic confrontation than yield a portion of their rights and work slowly toward a true compromise. The interesting thing is that the fifth option actually is not a short route to *anything*, since it doesn’t really resolve the problem. Nor is it the economical route, since it has a high price tag due to the friction and pressure of the option, and due to the damages created by the periodic explosions. But it looks like a quick and cheap route, and the people don’t take the time to investigate and see if this appearance is true or illusion. Activism pressures them to act, and to act now.

Passivity. Passivity predisposes the people to mechanically duplicate plans and programs, thinking that by copying these they will also copy the success that these plans and programs have had in

other contexts. It also predisposes them to use others (the professionals) in the achievement of their desired goals. And it predisposes the people to feel a strong dependence on and loyalty to their leaders.

◆ *Plans and programs for compromise that have been successful in other contexts are duplicated here, expecting also to copy their success.* Unfortunately, their success is not based upon the mere implementation of these plans and programs, but rather on the paradigm and worldview (lifestyle) that underlie and give meaning to these plans and programs. But passivity has problems understanding this.

◆ *The responsibility for achieving a compromise is turned over to the experts and professionals.* The common, average person does not really feel this responsibility. It is something best left to the professionals. Therefore, they do not intend nor expect to do it themselves. Rather, they contract others to do it for them. Regrettably, this is not the way to *learn* to achieve compromises.

◆ *If their leaders abandon the process of compromise, the people almost automatically will abandon it as well.* Their dependency on and loyalty to these leaders prevents these people from acting in a more independent fashion. And, since their leaders tend to come from the more feudal portion of the population (because this group is seen as the most likely to provide suitable leaders), and since feudalism tends to accept the route of confrontation instead of the route of compromise, then these people will tend to follow their leaders toward a cycle of confrontations, and they will tend to loyally support these leaders in these confrontations.

Conclusion

These toxins tend to cause those suffering from them to employ violent confrontation as the way to communicate and validate the existence of a conflict, and also they tend to cause these individuals to employ a cyclical confrontation as the way of “resolving” or managing the conflict. Since the option of cyclical confrontation tends not to provide a resolution of the problem or conflict, then these toxins actually lead to a *lack* of resolved conflicts. In fact, the people may even get to the point where they don’t even expect a *resolution* of their conflicts. They may simply be satisfied with

the mere *management* of these conflicts through a long cycle of confrontations, pressures, frictions, etc. Of course, these people would probably say (at least in the ideal theoretical world) that yes, they do expect a resolution to their conflicts. But what they actually do in the real world frequently may be quite different.

All of this has a fairly high price tag for the church, its ministries, missionary work, etc. It condemns us to a series of explosions and unresolvable conflicts. As has already been noted, explosions are very damaging. They destroy what we have built. They reduce our achievements to ashes. And unresolvable conflicts lock up our progress toward our goals.

Please note that all of this is especially true in the area of foreign missions work. As we have seen, more than 90% of the world’s evangelical missionary work force tends to come from a context that is less, and sometimes much less, bubble-oriented and toxin-impacted than our average Latin American context.⁵¹ Therefore, a Latin American missionary may easily find himself or herself working with other missionaries (team members, mission agency, etc.) that do not share or even understand this missionary’s susceptibility to these toxins and their resulting effect and impact in his or her behavior, such as in the area of conflict communication and management. Furthermore, almost 70% of the world’s population probably tends to come from a context that is less, and sometimes much less, bubble-oriented and toxin-impacted than our average Latin American context.⁵² Thus, a Latin American missionary may also easily find himself or herself ministering among a broader culture and people that do not share or even understand this missionary’s susceptibility to these toxins and their resulting effect and impact in his or her behavior. In either case, whether working with other missionaries who are less toxin oriented or working among a general population that is less toxin oriented, this Latin American missionary’s toxin-induced behavior may very well be judged as unacceptable by the broader group, and this can lead to being ignored, ostracized, disciplined, punished, or even openly rejected by this group. Even more importantly, this can also result in tarnishing the testimony of this Latin American missionary and the validity and integrity of the Gospel message that he or she brings.

Appendix 10

The bubble and the sphere of Christ: a useful analogy



© William F. Ritchey
Marbles in a container



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Individual water drop



© William F. Ritchey
Water drops in a container

Marbles and water drops provide a useful analogy that can help us see some of the differences between the bubble and the sphere of Christ, and how each can impact teamwork. In this analogy, marbles will represent the bubble, water drops will represent the sphere of Christ, and a plastic container will represent teamwork or a team of workers.

Basic description

Both marbles and water drops are spheres. But they have very different natures that lead to important differences in their behavior and interaction.

Different natures

Setting aside the basic differences of physical composition (glass and water), the differences in the natures of marbles and water drops can be grouped under four general categories.

Flexibility. For general purposes, marbles are hard, rigid, fragile, impermeable, and insoluble. They never adapt to the shape of the container in which they are placed, and they never take the shape of a water drop or another marble. They are highly independent and unique, insisting on their “autonomy.” And when they are mixed with a group of water drops, marbles always insist on going to the bottom of the container. They will

accept no other position, at least not without some sort of external intervention that artificially holds them in a different position in the container. And upon removing this external device, these marbles immediately assume their preferred position in the bottom of the container.

In contrast, and for general purposes, water drops are flexible, soft, resistant, moldable, permeable, and soluble. They always adapt to the shape of the container in which they are placed, and they always take the shape of the other water drops. In fact, upon joining the others, an individual water drop rapidly loses its individual and unique form in a very fluid and natural way. When they are mixed with marbles, water drops do not insist on any particular position in the container. They rapidly fit into any available space, again in a very fluid and natural way.

Unity. For general purposes, marbles are impermeable, closed, and always isolated (even within a group). They only have superficial contact with others (in other words, they “tolerate” others but they never truly mix, either with water drops or with other marbles). Therefore, they never *truly* fit with the other marbles or water drops. In scientific terminology, the maximum unity possible is only a *mixture* (“a portion of matter consisting of two or more components in varying proportions that retain their own properties”⁵³ and “the product of the random distribution of one substance through another without any chemical reac-

tion”⁵⁴). Marbles never achieve a true *solution* (“an act or the process by which a solid, liquid, or gaseous substance is homogeneously mixed with a liquid or sometimes a gas or solid; a homogeneous mixture formed by this process”⁵⁵). So there is no homogeneity with marbles. Just a mixture of components in which these components *retain their own individual properties*, without any transformation of substance and *without any chemical reaction* (in other words, without any productive reaction).

In contrast, and for general purposes, water drops are permeable and very open to a free exchange of “information” – they easily and rapidly share and receive content, thus transforming their very essence or substance. Also, they are almost never isolated and alone. Instead, they always mix completely with other water drops on contact. Thus they share a deep identification with other entities that permit permeability (blending and losing themselves in the resulting solution). And they always fit in completely with the other water drops, thus achieving the maximum possible unity (a true homogeneous solution, and not just a mere mixture).

Interaction. For general purposes, marbles collide with other marbles, and this friction is inevitable. Furthermore, if they are in movement, upon colliding they rapidly and drastically change their individual direction, causing significant impact and noise. And if they collide with sufficient force, they shatter destructively, and once broken, the damage is permanent and irreparable. Additionally, upon a forceful collision, the group is dispersed in all directions and for considerable distance, and this separation tends to be permanent (they normally do not get back together again without some external force acting on them). Therefore, if a group of marbles inside a plastic container is shaken, it creates a lot of noise, collisions, and friction between marbles. And these marbles also strike the container itself in which they are held, sometimes destructively.

In contrast, and for general purposes, water drops smoothly merge or blend with each other (and this process is inevitable and unstoppable). Also, when these drops are in movement, upon collision they yield their individual direction to the

group, and only cause a small, non-damaging and almost silent impact. When they do collide with force, it does create a disturbance, but of short duration. And later they merge or join back together (in other words, the disturbance is rapidly healed). In a group, they always mix completely with the others, creating a calm and tranquil environment. Therefore, if a group of water drops within a plastic container are shaken, it doesn’t create much noise, nor collisions, nor friction between drops. Furthermore, these shaken drops do exercise *some* pressure against the walls of the container, but normally not in a destructive fashion.

Individualism. Marbles conserve their individual identity upon mixing with others. They don’t share the “wealth” of their content or substance with the rest. Also, they commonly have strong, bright, and individual colors. Therefore, they may be considered to be striking (calling attention to themselves), and perhaps even “proud” and “vain.” Even within a group of marbles, the movement is individual. Additionally, due to their individual optical characteristics, they transform or distort images seen through an individual marble or through a group of marbles (in other words, they don’t faithfully transmit the message, but rather distort it in an individual and/or collective way).

In contrast, and for general purposes, water drops freely yield their individual identity upon contact with others. They share the totality of the “wealth” of their content or substance with the other drops. Also, they normally are almost invisible, making their contribution and then disappearing. And if they happen to have any color, they share this rapidly upon entering the group, and then disappear. Within a group of water drops, the movement is totally united. Additionally, due to their optical characteristics, they cause very little distortion or transformation of images seen through either an individual drop or a group of drops (in other words, they faithfully transmit the message with a minimum of distortion and “noise”). In fact, the least distortion of the message occurs when the drops are united, and the maximum distortion occurs when they are separated.

Notes

1. W. Bauder, “μυμέομαι”, in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 1:490–92.
2. Jason Mandryk, *Operation World Professional Edition DVD-ROM 2010* (Colorado Springs, CO: Global Mapping International, 2010), <www.operationworld.org> and <www.gmi.org>.
3. *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition* [book online], ed. William D. Taylor (Wheaton, IL: World Evangelical Fellowship, 1997, accessed 26 September 2011), available under the category “Mission” from <<http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/>>.
4. Rob Hay, Valerie Lim, Detlef Blöcher, Jaap Ketelaar, and Sarah Hay, *Worth Keeping: Global Perspectives on Best Practice in Missionary Retention* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2007). IMPORTANT NOTE: there is a previous version of this book, published in 2006, currently available online (April 2012) in four sections under the category “Mission” at <<http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/>>. This previous version carries practically the same title (when viewed on the title page of the first section), but the copyright date is 2006. Unfortunately, in the main menu where this work may be selected for download, the year of publication is listed as 2007 and the title is identical to the 2007 edition, which can be confusing. This previous edition of 2006 employs statistics that can be considerably different from those in the final 2007 hard-copy edition of the work. Also, the pagination is different. Of the two editions, the later 2007 edition was selected for statistics and citation in this work.
5. Unless otherwise noted, statistics in this section are based upon data from *Operation World*.
6. See Ted Limpic, “Brazilian Missionaries: How Long Are They Staying?,” in *Too Valuable to Lose*, 148; Jonathan Lewis, “Designing the ReMAP Research Project,” in *Too Valuable to Lose*, 77–83; Peter W. Brierley, “Missionary Attrition: The ReMAP Research Report,” in *Too Valuable to Lose*, 85–95; and Detlef Blöcher and Jonathan Lewis, “Further Findings In the Research Data,” in *Too Valuable to Lose*, 122–25. This last article includes some very important correction factors that need to be applied to the statistics given throughout *Too Valuable to Lose* for rapidly growing missions agencies. The statistics given for the countries representing Latin America were adjusted (as recommended in the article) for the 15% growth rate that these countries showed, resulting in an average total annual attrition rate of 10.61%.
7. See Detlef Blöcher, “What It Means,” in *Worth Keeping*, 40–42.
8. See Limpic, “Brazilian Missionaries,” 148; Lewis, “Designing the ReMAP Project,” 77–83; Brierley, “Missionary Attrition,” 85–95; and Blöcher and Lewis, “Further Findings,” 122–25.
9. Statistics in this section are based upon data from *Operation World*.
10. Statistics in this section are based upon data from *Operation World*.
11. Mandryk, *Operation World*, 51. Please note that in its basic regional description of church reality, this edition of *Operation World* does not differentiate much between North American and Latin American realities, but rather tends to describe the American church as a whole. However, since slightly more than half of the American evangelicals are from Latin America (according to *Operation World* statistics), then much of what is described as the general American evangelical scene will also apply to the Latin American scene.
12. Ibid., 51–52.
13. Ibid., 52.
14. Ibid., 51.
15. Ibid., 52.
16. *Oxford Dictionaries*, s.v. “insidious” [online], available from <www.oxforddictionaries.com>; accessed 29 March 2012.

17. *Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary*, s.v. “insidious” [online], available from <www.merriam-webster.com>; accessed 29 March 2012.
18. *Oxford Dictionaries*, s.v. “elusive” [online], available from <www.oxforddictionaries.com>; accessed 29 March 2012.
19. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “elusive” [online], available from <www.merriam-webster.com>; accessed 29 March 2012.
20. Information presented regarding carbon monoxide, its effects, and its treatment is based upon several sources, including:
- General encyclopedia articles
- The World Book Encyclopedia*, 1968 ed., s.v. “carbon monoxide,” by George L. Bush;
- Wikipedia*, s.v. “carbon monoxide” and “carbon monoxide poisoning” [online], available from <www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_monoxide> and <www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_monoxide_poisoning>; both accessed 29 March 2012;
- Medical articles
- Lillian Sholtis Brunner, Charles Phillips Emerson, Jr., L. Kraeer Ferguson, and Dorris Smith Suddarth, eds., *Textbook of Medical-Surgical Nursing*, 2d ed. (New York: Lippincott, 1970), 966;
- Taber’s Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary* (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company, 1973), s.v. “carbon monoxide” and “lassitude;”
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Carbon Monoxide Poisoning - Frequently Asked Questions” [online], available from <www.cdc.gov/co/faqs.htm>; and “Emergency Preparedness and Response - Clinical Guidance for Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning After a Disaster” [online], available from <www.emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/co_guidance.asp>; both accessed 29 March 2012;
- The U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health (Medline Plus), “Carbon Monoxide Poisoning (introductory article)” [online], available at <www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/carbonmonoxidepoisoning.html>; “Carbon Monoxide Poisoning (encyclopedia article)” [online], available from <www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002804.htm>; and “Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (encyclopedia article)” [online], available from <www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002375.htm>; all accessed 29 March 2012.
21. *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Carbon monoxide poisoning” [online], available from <www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_monoxide_poisoning>; accessed 29 March 2012.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Information presented regarding feudalism is based upon several sources, including:
- The World Book Encyclopedia*, 1968 ed., s.v. “feudalism,” by Bryce Lyon; “manorialism,” by Bryce Lyon; “Magna Carta,” by Bryce Lyon; and “trial by combat,” by Bryce Lyon;
- Pequeño Larousse ilustrado* [Pequeño Larousse Dictionary], 1985 ed. (Paris: Ediciones Larousse, 1985), s.v. “despotismo ilustrado” [enlightened despotism];
- Diccionario de la lengua española* [Dictionary of the Real Academia], 22nd ed. (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 2001), s.v. “feudalismo” [feudalism], “feudal” [feudal], “feudo” [fief], “absolutismo” [absolutism], “gobierno absoluto” [government by absolute rule] and “vasallaje” [vassalage].
24. *Diccionario de la lengua española* [Dictionary of the Real Academia], 22nd ed. (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 2001), s.v. “feudo” [fief] and “vasallaje” [vassalage].
25. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve, vol. 1, [1835], [online Kindle book], Kindle location 1246–47, available from <www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/815>; accessed 12 April 2012.
26. *Ibid.*, Kindle location 390–91.
27. *Ibid.*, Kindle location 969–70.
28. Information presented regarding the historical and religious factors that have impacted and altered the Latin American environment is based upon multiple sources, including:
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- book], available from <www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/815> and <www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/816>; both accessed 12 April 2012.
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 30. De Tocqueville, *Democracy*, vol. 1, Kindle locations 6157–63; and De Tocqueville, *Democracy*, vol. 2, Kindle locations 4702–08.
 31. Latourette, *Expansion of Christianity*, 36–46.
 32. De Tocqueville, *Democracy*, vol. 2, Kindle locations 4708–18.
 33. De Tocqueville, *The Old Regime*, 37.
 34. “Declaration of the Rights of Man,” 1789 [online], available from <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/rightsof.asp>; accessed 01 May 2012.
 35. De Tocqueville, *Democracy*, vol. 1, Kindle locations 387–92; and De Tocqueville, *The Old Regime*, 18–20, 183.
 36. De Tocqueville, *Democracy*, vol. 1, Kindle locations 317–20.
 37. Paz, *El laberinto*, 150–51.
 38. Ibid.
 39. David Hilbert and Stephan Cohn-Vossen, *Geometry and the Imagination*, 2d ed. (Chelsea, 1952, ISBN 0-8284-1087-9), cited in *Wikipedia*, available at <www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sphere>, accessed 01 November 2010.
 40. Paz, *El laberinto*, 51 [translated by the author].
 41. Ibid., 52 [translated by the author].
 42. Ibid., 102 [translated by the author].
 43. Projections based upon various sources, principally *Operation World CD-ROM*, copyright © 2001 by Patrick Johnstone, and *Operation World Professional Edition DVD-ROM*, copyright © 2010 by Jason Mandryk and GMI.
 44. See Marcia Lynn Whicker, *Toxic Leaders: When Organizations Go Bad* (Westport, London: Quorum, 1996) and James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, 1st edition (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), both cited and described in Rob Hay, “Leadership: Good/Toxic Leadership” in *Worth Keeping*, 261–68.

45. See *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Maslow’s hierarchy of needs,” accessed 30 January 2008, available from <www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs>; Janet A. Simons, Donald B. Irwin and Beverly A. Drinnien, *Psychology - The Search for Understanding* (New York: West Publishing Company, 1987), quoted in “Maslow’s hierarchy of needs” by Honolulu Community College, available from <www.honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/maslow.htm>, accessed 04 February 2008; and Alan Chapman, “Maslow’s hierarchy of needs,” accessed 04 February 2008, available from <www.businessballs.com/maslow.htm>.
46. Paz, *El laberinto*, 153 [translated by the author].
47. *Ibid.*, 153–54.
48. For more information on this and the other factors mentioned in this section, please see William Ritchey, *Superando paradigmas y burbujas: Despojándonos del pecado que tan fácilmente nos envuelve* [Overcoming Paradigms and Bubbles: Laying Aside the Sin that so Easily Entangles Us] (n. p.: Academia de Misiones Mundiales, 2011), 47–49.
49. This analysis of how society in general detects and resolves or manages its conflicts began as a detailed study that we did together as a class (both professor and students) in one of my sociology courses that I taught in a Latin American seminary in 2002. Therefore, the basic assessments here come from Latin American students analyzing Latin American society.
50. Paz, *El laberinto*, 102 [translated by the author].
51. Projections based upon various sources, principally *Operation World CD-ROM*, copyright © 2001 by Patrick Johnstone, and *Operation World Professional Edition DVD-ROM*, copyright © 2010 by Jason Mandryk and GMI.
52. Projections based upon various sources, principally *Operation World CD-ROM*, copyright © 2001 by Patrick Johnstone, and *Operation World Professional Edition DVD-ROM*, copyright © 2010 by Jason Mandryk and GMI.
53. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “mixture” [online], available from <www.merriam-webster.com>; accessed 22 October 2012.
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