

## **Relating**

*In this Section, we will discuss relating our staff and the fruit of our ministry to the Body of Christ.*

*We have demonstrated, at least to our own satisfaction, that we are a specialized function within the Body of Christ. Our Aim is to multiply laborers in every nation, thus helping fulfill Christ's Great Commission.*

*By producing laborers, we bring about growth and maturity in Christ's Body. But this is not enough. Our task is not only to produce laborers, but to attempt to relate ourselves and our fruit successfully to the various parts of the Body.*

*We must also be concerned about relating the fruit of our ministry from a practical point of view. Our calling is specific. It does not include the full range of functions within the Body. If we are to fulfill our calling, we must protect the specific nature of our Aim. Therefore, it is necessary in practice that we relate ourselves and our fruit effectively to the broader dimensions of the Body. Otherwise, we will become encumbered with responsibilities outside our calling and we will lose our effectiveness.*

### **I. Why do we need to Relate?**

#### **A. We are a part of the Body**

We are part of something far bigger than the Navigator organization. We are sons and daughters of God. We bear His name and participate in His works. We are citizens of His Kingdom - "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God..." - 1 Peter 2:9.

We are members of Christ's Body, the Church. Collectively, we are a specialized function within the Body. Individually, we live life and raise our children in a local community.

All of these facets of our identity attest to one thing: we are a part.

As such, if we do not seek to relate harmoniously within the Body, we hinder Christ's desire that His people be "brought to complete unity" - John 17:21-23 - in order that the world may believe that the Father sent Him.

#### **B. We are Interdependent with the rest of the Body**

In the Body of Christ, nobody does everything. All are gifted. All have a part to play. Gifts are to be used for the common good of the Body, so that we must work in concert with one another - 1 Corinthians 12:7.

As Navigators, we aspire to contribute new life and growth to the Body: converts, disciples, laborers and leaders. We also want to contribute concepts and truths as they are acquired in the exercise of our ministry.

Others, in turn, edify us through fellowship, counsel, exhortation, worship and teaching. They assume responsibility for shepherding and leading the fruit of our ministry. We owe our continued mobility to the fact that the rest of the Body is there to take up where we leave off.

## **II. What does it mean to Relate?**

A. Recognizing that we, as a part of the Body, must exercise unity with the other parts - Ephesians 4:3.

B. Mutual edification: we benefit from the ministry and instruction of others and, in turn, seek to serve them with what God has entrusted to us - Ephesians 4:16.

C. Abstaining from value judgments on the work of others. We rejoice over all progress, by whomever it is made, towards the spread of the Gospel in the world - 1 Corinthians 4:1-7; Philippians 1:15-18.

D. Serving according to genuine needs that we can help to meet.

## **III. Suggested Guidelines for relating our Staff to the Body**

### **A. To other Specialized Groups**

1. Personally know our peers - other leaders
2. Initiate or participate in prayer with these leaders
3. Participate together in ministry, at least within the sphere of our calling.

### **B. To Local Congregations**

1. Maintain a meaningful relationship with a local congregation for mutual edification.
2. Serve that local congregation according to our gifts and abilities - 2 Corinthians 8:12. But, a local congregation should not become dependent upon mobile specialists. It should rather be built upon more permanent “foundational” persons.
3. Be set apart, where practicable, by a local congregation - Acts 13:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8:23.

### C. Dealing with Divided Loyalties

Often, we are confronted with the dilemma of divided loyalties: Navigator responsibilities versus responsibilities towards local congregations or other specialized groups. Multiple loyalties are a fact of life. One can, and must, relate in several directions at the same time.

## IV. Suggested Guidelines for relating the Fruit of our Ministry to Local Congregations

In establishing disciples, we need to begin early to teach them the importance of Relating; that they are called into unity with the Body; that their spiritual welfare needs the relationship to a local congregation. We want them - “to demonstrate Christ's love by identifying with and serving other believers” - Page 39.

### A. Problems to Recognize

1. Those whom we win out of the world are not always willing or able to relate to existing local congregations. Differences in mentalities, values and cultures are sometimes too great.
2. Lack of viable local congregations. Sometimes, no wineskins exist for the new wine from our ministry - Matthew 9:17. In such circumstances, we cannot abandon our fruit. But we must also find alternatives that allow us to maintain our specific calling.

### B. Alternatives to Consider

1. We can provide a half-way house as a bridge between the world and local congregations. This would be a local Navigator provision for evangelizing, establishing and equipping ...half way between the world and the local congregation. It may meet in a dormitory, barracks or home.

Half-way houses are effective in meeting the needs of new Christians and of members of established congregations. New converts need them as a place to mature as they come out of the world. Established Christians find small group fellowships effective for meeting personal needs and as a context for outreach.

2. We can help our fruit to integrate into established local congregations. We do this by:
  - a. Example,
  - b. Teaching
  - c. Helping to resolve individual problems.

- Individual differences must be taken into account. We should guide our fruit into congregations that fit them best.
- Relate our fruit to local congregations that are committed to the deity of Christ and the authority of the Bible -see Page 30.
- Help our fruit to resolve their conflict of loyalties between The Navigators and local congregations.

d. Establish rapport with pastors and help to resolve the difficulties that occur as our fruit relate.

In the final analysis, the individual must accept the responsibility for his own relating. He will have to determine where he fits best into the Body and obey God accordingly.

3. We can encourage clusters of our fruit to form local fellowships that will grow into mature congregations. This is necessary where suitable local congregations do not exist.

a. Where such fellowships are formed, we should influence them towards the biblical ideals of Christian community and witness.

b. Navigator staff should not assume foundational leadership functions in these fellowships.

c. We should maintain fraternal rather than organizational ties with these fellowships.

This Alternative makes a local ministry much more complex and should only be used where the other two Alternatives are not practicable. Before adopting it, we should consult with our Navigator overseers.

The choice of an Alternative will be partly determined by the environment in which we minister. We want to choose the one which is best for all involved: for those whom we disciple as well as for ourselves.

The most common and most simple solution is a combination of Alternatives 1 and 2.

Starting local congregations under Navigator auspices or with a Navigator identity is not an Alternative. Our sphere of service is not local. When a specialized group evolves into a local congregation, it loses its mobility and its effectiveness, in terms of our Primary Aim.

## **V. Application**

The nations are in various stages of response to the Gospel. Consequently, just as individuals bear different responsibilities, we can say that nations have certain roles to fulfill in God's purposes - Acts 17:26, 27; Matthew 21:43.

This means that the specific vision that we see for our laborers may vary from nation to nation. They will always seek to evangelize the lost and to establish the saved, thus multiplying more of their kind. But, specifically, their contribution to the whole will be influenced by what God is doing in that nation. For example:

- Being models of love and faithfulness on the family level
- Being salt and light within society by exercising integrity and morality in business and government
- Serving in local congregations and other specialized groups
- Extension of the Gospel within the nation
- Being a resource for global mission

To what end do we seek to multiply laborers? The answers will be found as the laborers identify with others in the Body and commit themselves on the local level. There they will find a stable context for their labors.