



# In His Service



A Newsletter from the teaching ministry of  
**Dr. Daniel M. Sweger**  
7991 Port Republic Road, Port Republic, VA 24471 USA  
email: [dsweger@cfw.com](mailto:dsweger@cfw.com) Phone: (540) 249-4833  
ABLE Ministries

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**"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them ..." Matthew 28:19-20**

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**April 2002**

## Upcoming Africa Trip

Many have been asking me when my next ministry trip to Africa is going to be. I can now give an approximate answer: May 19 – July 10. Most of the time will be spent ministering in Zambia.

As many of you know, I have been to Zambia before, and the people of Zambia have a special place in my heart. A dear brother and friend, Peter Hilhorst, has been helping to administer what they call the Missions School, and it has been a desire of mine to minister there.

In February Bruce Mitchell returned from his trip to Africa. Upon his return he wrote:

"In the far, northwestern corner of Zambia, in Zambezi, lives the King, Mwanta Ishindi, of the Lunda Nation. He has 13 chiefs in Zambia and 28 chiefs in Angola. This born again King is filled with the Holy Spirit and greatly desires to see his Lunda people come to know Jesus. I have committed myself to getting men of God who will make the rigorous 2 day journey by 4x4 into this part of the world. They need evangelists, prophets, and teachers."

When I read this I immediately volunteered to go to serve the church in Zambezi. It has taken some time to work out the details, and there are some dates that are still fluid, but after all, it is Africa.

Here is my schedule as it now stands:

**May 19** – Leave from Washington

**May 21** – Arrive in Bloemfontein, South Africa

**May 22-26** – Minister at Zoe Bible Church in Maseru, Lesotho with Mark Hilhorst

**May 27-June 1** – "The Coming Day of the Lord" seminar in Bloemfontein, S.A.

**June 2-3** – Travel by vehicle with Mark Hilhorst to the Missions School at Kafue, Zambia

**June 4-16** – Teach at the Missions School

**June 17-22** – Minister to the church under the leadership of Decus Mwenzi in Solwezi, Zambia.

**June 23** – Travel to Zambezi, Zambia with Mark H.

**June 24-July 1** – Minister to the Lundi Nation at Zambezi.

**July 2-3** – Return to Lusaka, Zambia

**July 3** – Depart Lusaka, Zambia

**July 4** – Arrive in London, England

**July 4-10** – Visit Judy in Brussels, Belgium and possibly do some ministry among the refugees and missionary team.

A note on the last entry: Our oldest, Judy, is currently on a two-year mission term and should be in Brussels working with a Southern Baptist missions team in July. Brussels is one of the "gateway cities" in Europe where refugees from all over the world come and live while their applications are being processed, and thus it is a tremendous missions opportunity.

## Seminar

Last month I taught "The Coming Day of the Lord" seminar for the first time. After all the months of study I put into the preparation, actually teaching it was exciting.

The attendance averaged 12-14 people for each of the four nights.

## The Coming Day of the Lord

**A comprehensive and illustrated study of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel and of the prophecies leading up to the return of Jesus**

A set of 4-two hour cassette tapes or 8 CD's of the seminar are available, with the notes. If you are interested in having a set just drop me a note or call and I will send one out.

## The Nicolaitans

As I was studying and preparing for the final session in the seminar, I was examining the seven letters that Jesus dictated to the seven churches in Asia. One particular mention that Jesus made in those letters of a group of people caught my attention – the Nicolaitans.

In the letters to both the churches at Ephesus and Pergamum Jesus mentions them, and even goes so far as to say that He agrees with the Ephesians in that they "hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans". As I researched further it became obvious to me why.

The most probable derivation of the term “nicolaitan” is that it is a combination of two Greek words: the first is *nikos* or *nicao* means to dominate or manipulate; the other word in *laos*, which mean the people and the is word from which we derive the term laity. Taken together, a nicolaitan is one who dominates or uses the people to serve their own purposes.

For many years I have been disturbed by the distinction within the church of clergy and laity. That distinction divides the people into two groups. The clergy, in whom authority is vested and who, because of their titles and position, are often perceived to be better Christians than the rest, and the laity, who are thus second-class citizens because they have not had formal training in theological matters.

Dr. Ken Blue, in his book **Healing Spiritual Abuse**, puts it this way:

Ecclesiastical hierarchies ... are founded on a sharp distinction between clergy and laity. The professional ministry (clergy) exists apart from the people (laity). The clergy play by different rules. They have different privileges, answer to a different set of expectations and are judged by different standards of conduct.

The clergy are thought of as having privileged access to God's higher wisdom. While spiritual leaders protest such assumptions, their unspoken signals often contradict their words. The laity may indeed conduct activities labeled “ministry”. But the real “ministry” is often ferociously defended and jealously guarded. (p. 142)

These are strong words, but how often do we find ourselves in churches where the only “vision” put forth is the one officially endorsed by the church leadership? How often are we called upon to help fulfill the vision of the pastor and other leaders?

That is not the type of leadership that Jesus gave. As Jesus walked with his disciples, he taught and modeled a different kind of leadership: servanthood. At one point he said,

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Matt 20:25-28)

Later, when Jesus and his disciples had gathered for the Passover feast, Jesus took off his outer garment, put on a towel, filled a basin with water and proceeded to wash his disciples feet. He was among them as one who served; the household servant assigned to this task was the lowest of all the servants. The next day he laid down his life for them.

This attitude carried over into the early church. While the Bible does not tell us much about the government and leadership structures, it is clear that the New Testament church rejected the hierarchy of the Old Testament. The apostles were among the people as those who served.

The structure under the Old Covenant was marked by those set apart as prophet, priest and king by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and also by those who inherited those positions. On the Day of Pentecost, however, this all changed. The Holy Spirit was poured out equally on **all flesh**, erasing totally the distinction. All were equally called to minister: sons and daughters, young men and women, as well as old men and women. “Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy.” (1 Cor 14:5)

To this end Jesus has given certain gifts to the church in the form of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The purpose of these gifted people is to serve the church by using the gift to equip the saints to minister, not to carry a title or receive special recognition. (See Eph 4:7,11-12)

Paul is a good example of this. We often refer to him as the Apostle Paul, but he never did. Whenever he referred to his apostleship in the greetings of his letters he used the expression “Paul, an apostle of Jesus” or “Paul, a bond-servant”. These are job descriptions, not titles. He was first and foremost a servant.

And so it is to be with us. We must put aside titles and just seek to serve in the capacity that Jesus has appointed us to serve in his Body. Then our greatest honor will be to see labors of our lives bearing fruit in the lives of those among whom we have served.

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself.... Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to

I believe that God has given me a vision for short-term cross cultural missions. The ministry in Africa continues to be fruitful, and I want to thank all who have partnered with me in ministry. As I lay plans to return I need your support.

First, as I have experienced in the past, I need prayer support. It is foolhardy for me to try to travel and minister in strange countries and cultures without intercession of the saints back home. Secondly, I need financial support. If you can participate in either way would you let me know? For your convenience I have enclosed an envelope that you may use. Send replies to:

**ABLE Ministries**  
**Attn: Dan Sweger**  
**3993 Westbrier Drive**  
**Harrisonburg, VA 22802**

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be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, being made in the likeness of man. (Phil 2:3, 5-7)

## **A CALL FOR PARTNERS**