

# Beavers or Trainers?

*Suppose you are sent to a people who have never heard the Gospel. What would be your plan from the day you arrive? What sort of projects would you undertake?*

*Follow this story of two men, both assigned to unreached areas.*

## Mr. Beaver

### Mr. Beaver's Plan

Ten thousand souls who have never even heard the name of Jesus! "Such a challenge calls for immediate action," Mr. and Mrs. Beaver thought. "How can we reach the largest number of souls for Christ in the shortest time? We must have helpers. We must have a church building, and a native evangelist or two. We must have a Christian school to reach young people. All right in the central city, of course.

"After that, we must start outstations in strategic market towns as well. We must organize tent campaigns with public address system, recordings, and films. We must also start a welfare program for the poor. A certain amount of relief funds, administered carefully to the deserving, will make the love of Christ known and attract people to our church."

### Mr. Beaver's Projects

They purchased a fine piece of property, and erected a house, preaching hall, school buildings, and a beautiful church building. Crowds of people came to listen to the singing, see Christian films, and hear the Gospel preached. People began to respond, starting with the missionaries' servants, and soon the busy compound was like one happy family, all gathering for worship each morning.

Mr. Beaver was never too busy to see callers, hear their tales of woe, point them to the Savior, and to give them a little judicious help. "It's not too wise," he thought, "to give out a lot of money for nothing." So he devised a plan to employ many of the poor people around the compound, improving the place. At the same time, these people would have the opportunity to hear the gospel, and "not only will our property benefit, but I'm sure that many of them will accept the Lord!"

Within the first year, a number had been baptized, and Mr. Beaver set about to organize the church. He chose several promising young people to go off to a Bible institute. When they returned as his helpers, he would be able to let his original evangelists go. With only his own spiritual children associated with him in the work, they would all work under his direction, and surely the Lord could bless more where the workers were all one in heart. The original evangelists didn't always support his plans with all the enthusiasm he wished for.

### Mr. Beaver's Progress

In three years, Mr. Beaver had church buildings in six market towns. He travelled constantly, and wherever he went the people flocked to him for help and advice. Though one or two turned against him, the large majority looked to him as children to a father.

There were now elders and deacons, and when he presided at their meetings and saw his own spiritual children taking their places as leaders in the church, his heart just melted. True, they were a bit hesitant and always consulted him before making plans, but that was only natural and right. After all, they had only a few years' experience in the church and couldn't be expected to know how to govern the House of God. Several times he had to put his foot down when one of them advanced his own ideas of how church affairs should be managed. But that one would soon subside and realize his mistake.

What a happy family the church was, indeed, with everything working out just as he had planned it! Truly God was good!

## Mr. Trainer

### Mr. Trainer's Plan

Mr. Trainer was not so dynamic, but he knew just as clearly what his plans were for the church that was not yet born. "The church, which is his body"—the Body of Christ! The Church which is, through the indwelling Christ, the light of the world! Where each member is in vital contact with the Head, and so, necessarily, is in vital contact with every other member! Where each member is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and feels his responsibility to live and witness for the One who is everything to him!

Mr. Trainer wanted to plant a church that would be a living plant, with its roots going down into God; a church which did not look to the missionary, or any other man, for its needs, but which was centered upon Christ; a church which would be given "gifts" by the Holy Spirit, and would be able to use those gifts to edify itself, and bring souls into the kingdom.

### Mr. Trainer's Projects

Instead of buying a large compound, Mr. Trainer rented a little house with a tiny courtyard. The only thing unusual about his place was his books. No chapel, no paid workers.

When he wasn't visiting from shop to shop, Mr. Trainer simply sat in his doorway with a small table of books. Those who stopped by to look at the books received a free Gospel tract and heard the Gospel in simple language. Some began to stop by in the evenings, and Mr. Trainer taught them to sing Gospel choruses and read the Word with them.

Mr. Trainer did not hold church services, attract crowds, spend large sums of money, or employ many people. People did not come to him for financial assistance—what would be the use, when he did not seem to have any more money than anyone else? But he attracted a few, "whose heart the Lord opened," and day by day he taught them more about the Savior. It was a full year before he had a baptismal service. The numbers baptized were far smaller than those baptized by Mr. Beaver, but the joy in his heart was just as real.

### Mr. Trainer's Progress

Even before these converts were baptized, Mr. Trainer started teaching them about the Church. He taught them that they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and they learned to pray. He encouraged their desire to win family members and friends, and to witness to others. He encouraged them to bring others to the little evening gathering, and to testify in front of those they brought.

He did not make too many concrete suggestions, but prayed, and waited for the Holy Spirit to guide. Soon he was invited to their homes to talk to their families about the Lord. He always made sure the

one who invited him had a chance to speak, sharing their testimony. Sometimes others of the group went along and had a chance to testify.

Soon the little informal evening meeting was being held in various homes, and different ones were taking turns leading, and sharing testimonies and thoughts from the Word. They would tell about witnessing opportunities and bring prayer requests. It wasn't long until other souls were coming to the Savior, not because of the direct efforts of the missionary, but rather through the testimony of these young Christians. That, felt Mr. Trainer, was the greatest triumph of all!

### **The Church Goes Forward**

Mr. Trainer wanted to start open-air meetings, but wanting it to be a church effort, he restrained himself and said nothing, only praying about the matter. One day one of them asked, "Couldn't we have a meeting somewhere where more people would come, and we could preach the Gospel to them?" When they couldn't think of a building large enough, Mr. Trainer mentioned open-air meetings he had attended. They had many questions about this, which he answered. But he made no recommendation, and heard no more about the subject for a week or two, when suddenly the whole group came asking for his help to have an open-air meeting.

Before long the church was holding these open-air meetings regularly. Leading these meetings showed the Christians their need for more Bible study, so they began to study the Bible together.

By the time there were a dozen or so baptized, Mr. Trainer encouraged them to choose deacons as the church did in Acts 6. After much prayer, the church chose deacons, and Mr. Trainer suggested they take turns leading and speaking in the Sunday service. He took his turn with the others.

After meeting in homes all this time, they began to feel the need for a meeting place. Mr. Trainer strongly encouraged them to do what they could themselves toward a building, but this seemed almost impossible to them. Finally the deacons made an offering box for gifts for the new church building, and the money began to come in.

The gifts were more than they expected; and yet they were but a drop in the bucket compared with what was needed. Suggestions of "church bazaars" and "fun fairs" were made several times (wherever had they heard of such things?). Mr. Trainer counselled against them, but did not feel that he had the authority to forbid. He did spend much time in prayer, and none of these suggestions was put into effect.

With an occasional gift from a local businessman or neighboring church, the building fund grew. The church contributed the labor as well, and many put in long hours of back-breaking labor after their regular work day. When the simple little chapel was finished, throngs of neighbors and friends turned up for the meeting, several of the deacons preached, and praises ascended to God for their own church building!

## **The Outcome**

*War came, and both Mr. Beaver and Mr. Trainer had to leave. After the war, others were assigned to their former fields. What did they find?*

### **Mr. Beaver's Fruit**

When war broke out and the missionary left, the jobs were finished and the school closed down. There was no one to pay the evangelists, and they gradually drifted away to other places or into secular jobs.

The deacons and elders had been accustomed to taking orders from Mr. Beaver and had had no real experience looking after things themselves. They quarreled as to which one would take his place and be the "big chief." None of them had ever preached a sermon in his life. Some tried, but their efforts did not draw the crowds, and attendance soon dwindled to almost nothing. Church services gradually ceased.

Then quarrels about the property began. True, it belonged not to them, but to the mission board; but surely it was up to the church to look after it while the missionary was gone! In the end, several families took up free residence there.

### **Mr. Trainer's Fruit**

The church here had gone through the sorrows of war with the Lord at their side. Continuing the work of the church was no problem—they had been doing it themselves all along. Money was scarce, but the hearts of the people were open as never before, and they had numerous baptisms. They missed Mr. Trainer very much; but they were driven more than ever to the Lord, and found Him sufficient for their every need.

*If you want Mr. Trainer's kind of fruit, what kind of plans and projects will you choose? Does it matter how you begin?*

*Abridged from "The Right to Run Things" (from Have We No Rights? by Mabel Williamson)*

