

We Hold The Rope:
Reflections from Philippians and the Apostle Paul's Relationship with a Rope-Holding Church
by

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William Carey is considered to be the "Father of Modern Missions." He departed as a missionary with his family for India in 1793. One of the leaders who became a rope-holder for William Carey and the preaching of the gospel in India recorded the following:

"Our undertaking to India really appeared to me, on its commencement, to be somewhat like a few men, who were deliberating about the importance of penetrating into a deep mine, which had never before been explored, we had no one to guide us; and while we were thus deliberating, [William] Carey, as it were, said *"Well, I will go down, if you will hold the rope."* But before he went down...he, as it seemed to me, took an oath from each of us, at the mouth of the pit, to this effect—that "while we lived, we should never let go of the rope."

Peter Morden, *Offering Christ to the World* (Waynesboro: Paternoster, 2003), 136.

Why do your missionaries need rope-holders?

1. Hostile ministry contexts are _____.

"For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you are all partakers of grace with me." (Phil. 1:7, see also 1:13-17, 19-26)

2. Unresolved relational conflicts are a _____.

"Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment." (Phil. 1:15-17, see also 4:2-3)

3. Personnel needs are _____.

"But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2:19-21)

4. Losses must be _____.

"But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ." (Phil. 3:7-8)

5. Financial needs are often only understood by a _____.

"You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs." (Phil. 4:15-16)