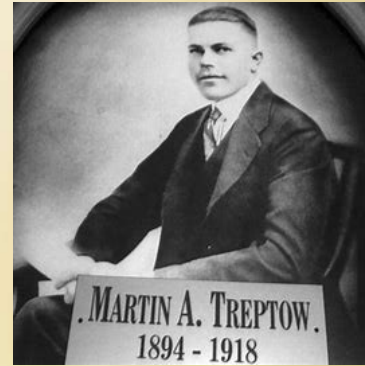


## Excellence in Local Church Ministry

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

The Pledge of Private Martin Treptow, a WWI soldier:

“America must win this war. Therefore, I will work, I will save, I will sacrifice, I will endure, I will fight cheerfully and do my utmost, as if the issue of the whole struggle depended on me alone.”



1

## Excellence in Local Church Ministry

- Pauline Striving for the Mastery in Local Church Ministry
  - 1 Corinthians 9 and 15
- Local Church Commitment to Three Realms of Excellence
  - Isaiah 5:20
  - Philippians 4:8
- Two Necessary Ingredients of Local Church Ministry Excellence
  - Psalm 78:72
  - Genesis 20:1-7
- How to Destroy Local Church Ministry Excellence
  - The Tract League (2023)

2

## Pauline Striving for the Mastery for LCM (1 Corinthians 9:1-17; 15:10)

- Striving to serve people in the LCM (9:1-2, 19-23).
- Striving through self-sacrifice for LCM (9:3-5).
- Striving through bi-vocational LCM (9:6, 15).
- Striving to eliminate bi-vocational LCM (9:7-14).
- Striving to make preaching the gospel the goal of LCM (9:16-18).
- Striving to be a team connected in LCM (9:24).
- Striving with temperance in service of LCM (9:25, 27).
- Striving for an incorruptible crown, the saved of LCM (9:25; see Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19).
- Striving with clarity of purpose and method in LCM (9:26).
- Striving with hard work for LCM, with harder humility (15:10).

3

## Local Church Commitment to Three Realms of Excellence

Reality – LCM commitment to truth, not falsehood

Morality – LCM commitment to right, not wrong

Aesthetics – LCM commitment to beauty, not ugliness

Isa. 5:20, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

Phil. 4:8, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

4

## Local Church Commitment to Three Realms of Excellence

2021 ACCC resolution, "God's Sovereignty Over Beauty":

"Prior to the fall of man . . . Nothing failed to be right, truthful, and beautiful. Regarding ethics, all creation was very righteous because no sin existed therein. Regarding reality, all creation was very truthful because no lie had been told. Regarding aesthetics, all creation was very beautiful because nothing ugly was there. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."

"Since the Fall, the universal "very good" is no longer immanent in creation. Because of the curse of man's sin, absolute righteousness now transcends our sinful world, and man must delight in the law of the Lord to know ethical goodness (Ps. 1:2); absolute truth now transcends this domain of the lie, and man must submit in faith to Christ the Redeemer to know the good way, the good truth, and the good life (John 14:6); and absolute beauty transcends this now uglier place, and man must look through the eyes of the Lord to see good artistry (Deut. 11:11-12). These treasures come only from the Lord, for they are the righteousness, truth, and beauty of holiness (Luke 1:75, Rev. 3:7, Ps. 29:2)."

[[www.accc4truth.org](http://www.accc4truth.org)]

5

## Local Church Commitment to Three Realms of Excellence

2021 ACCC resolution, "God's Sovereignty Over Beauty":

"Tragically, since the Fall sinful man has preferred the vulgar over the transcendent. Churches often begin to follow this pattern with the rejection of God's sovereignty over beauty, which leads to dire consequences in the loss of truth and righteousness. In his book, *The Triumph of Vulgarity: Rock Music in the Mirror of Romanticism*, Humanities professor Robert Pattison has shown how the pantheistic romanticism of rock-n-roll robbed Western culture and many of its churches of an ordinate affection for the transcendent. Today, many churches prefer the ugly rather than the beautiful, because it is the comfortable possession of the common man. This is the romance of pantheistic romanticism, where transcendence became inauthentic pretention. Pattison explains what this loss of transcendent beauty in music has meant for Christianity:

"Rock knocks the props out from under religion, first, by shifting the locus of faith from God to self, and secondly, by depriving sects and churches of their claim to exclusive revelation. By forcing churches to compete on the basis of their ability to titillate the instincts of their worshippers, vulgar pantheism compels the champions of organized religions to abandon their pretension to superior truth and turns them into entrepreneurs of emotional stimulation."

[[www.accc4truth.org](http://www.accc4truth.org)]

6

## Two Necessary Ingredients of Ministry Excellence

Ps. 78:72, "So he [King David] fed them according to **the integrity of his heart**; and guided them by **the skillfulness of his hands.**"

Genesis 20 and "A Tale of Two Leaders":

- 20:1-2, Abraham lacks integrity, but he has the skill.
- 20:3-7. Abimelech has integrity, but he lacks the skill.

Conclusion: Striving for the mastery in ministry, with a commitment to excellence regarding truth, righteousness, and beauty, requires both the integrity of our hearts and the skill of our hands. We need to desire what is true, right, and beautiful with true integrity, and we must work hard at understanding what is true, right, and beautiful with great expertise.

7

## How to Destroy LCM Excellence [The Tract League, 2023]

- Don't attend  
Excellent local church ministry requires faithful attendance. Heb. 10:22-25, "Let us draw near with a true heart. . . Let us hold fast the confession of our faith. . . Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembly of ourselves together, as the manner of some is."
- Don't join as a member  
Excellent local church ministry requires the covenant of church membership. Acts 5:12-14, "And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." See also 1 Cor. 6:12-13.
- If you attend, arrive late and leave early  
Excellent local church ministry requires genuine love for one another and finding reward in ministry to one another. Phil. 4:1, "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved."

8

## How to Destroy LCM Excellence

[The Tract League, 2023]

- Let the pastor do it

Excellent local church ministry is the ministry of the entire body. Rom. 12:4-8, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."

- Gossip and be critical

Excellent local church ministry practices mutual encouragement. 1 Thess. 5:11, "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."

9

## How to Destroy LCM Excellence

[The Tract League, 2023]

- Don't give

Excellent local church ministry is generous ministry. 2 Cor. 9:6, "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

- Don't pray

Excellent local church ministry commits to prayer together. Acts 2:42, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

- Don't make disciples

Excellent local church ministry is ministry of faithful witnesses. Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. And ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

10

## How to Destroy LCM Excellence [The Tract League, 2023]

A final word about reward and warning:

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building [i.e., the local church of Corinth]. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, **he shall receive a reward**. If any man's work shall be burned, **he shall suffer loss**: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? **If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are**” (1 Cor. 3:9-17).

11

## Excellence in Local Church Ministry

The Sentinel's Creed of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier  
(The Christian's Creed of the Empty Tomb of the Local Church):

“My dedication to this sacred duty is total and whole-hearted. In the responsibility bestowed on me never will I falter. And with dignity and perseverance my standard will remain perfection. Through the years of diligence and praise and the discomfort of the elements, I will walk my tour in humble reverence to the best of my ability. It is he who commands the respect I protect, his bravery that made us so proud. Surrounded by well meaning crowds by day, alone in the thoughtful peace of night, this soldier will in honored glory rest under my eternal vigilance.”



12