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JIREH COMMUNITY- A Brigade of spiritual para-medics.

*A compare and contrast analogy between the identity and roles of church and para-church groups and hospital and para-medic groups.

<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>PARA-CHURCH</u>
1) Stationary	mobile
2) Cradle to grave nurture/care	apostolic/pioneer, more short-term
3) limited number of personnel	unlimited available personnel
4) promotes doctrine and denomination	promotes spiritual health
5) viewed as propagating by outsiders	unintimidating to outsiders
<u>HOSPITAL</u>	<u>PARA-MEDIC</u>
1) Stationary	mobile/ambulance
2) long term health maintenance	emergency/life or death
3) only highly qualified personnel	virtually anyone
4) operational concerns to stay in business	can bring people to any hospital
5) must compete for business	not in it for business/volunteers

*1 A hospital needs a large stationary facility where people can remain as long as they need to. The hospital facility can house all the latest equipment and technology and is expected to do so. A church also needs a large stationary facility in order for all the members to gather together. A church is also expected to have the latest technologies and methods in church growth, sunday school curriculum etc. in order to meet the needs and demands of the church congregation.

- A para-medic carries only what he can fit in the ambulance and is not expected to have any more equipment than what is necessary for basic life support. The same is true for the para-church worker. Usually carries only what can be fit in a suitcase and needs little more than himself and the gifts and talents God has given personally and makes available to us through His spirit.

*2 The majority of a hospitals concerns are for complete health restoration and on-going, long-term health maintenance for its patients. This can mean anything from a major operation in theatre, regular hospital visits, therapy and even education to alter one's lifestyle for better health. A church has similar concerns in that it is called upon by the congregation in the event of a major crisis, plus regular counselling and other forms of therapy, and also educating and helping people alter their lifest. in order to achieve better spiritual health.

- A para-medic is concerned with life or death, often confronting dangerous situations himself in order to save the life of another. Primary concern is saving lives and maintaining basic life support. Interaction with a patient is usually very brief as the para-medic quickly hands the patient over to the hospital for the long-term recovery and care. This is true for the para-church worker also, often meeting people in a dangerous or a life or death situation and then snatching them from the powers of spiritual death. This exchange is generally very short as compared to the on-going spiritual nurture and discipleship that is provided by the local fellowship.

A brigade of Spiritual Para-medics con't.

A para-church worker then is by its nature short-term just as the harvest occupies comparatively little time in light of the whole job of plowing, planting, watering, fertilizing, weeding, then transporting, storing and finally manufacturing and marketing the finished product. A para-church worker is often instrumental in pioneering a new work that the church eventually oversees and administrates, just as a para-medical group might be the first to see the need for more hospitals in certain locations.

- *3 A hospital has a limited number of personnel available to them or that they can employ. Doctors, nurses, specialists, administrators, etc. all need a lot of training which results in a limited number of people able to do the job. Also, because of their training and expertise they demand a high wage which results in a limited number being employed, meaning not all available personnel are even being utilized. A church experiences the same situation with only a limited number of people completing seminary or other such degrees that would qualify them to hold a paid position in a church. And also, because of the limited funds available to a church to have employees only a portion of those qualified even get a job.

- To become qualified to administer emergency first aid one needs only a weekend course and on-going refresher courses to maintain your skills. But even if you don't have that a bit of common sense and courage could save someone's life too. This means that everyone could be a volunteer trainee to administer emergency first aid. The same parallel is true with the para-church groups, virtually the entire Christian population are potential para-church volunteers to administer spiritual first-aid in any number of ways. Usually the only requirement is the courage to volunteer. A short training course or apprenticeship period is helpful just like it is for emergency first-aid. Again, there are almost no limits to the available personnel one can draw upon for the para-church group.

- *4 A hospital has huge operational and organizational concerns in order to keep functioning on a daily basis. This is due to the size of the facility, staff, and the nature of the work being long-term, complete health care. A church has many of these same operational and organizational concerns to keep operating. Again, it is often due to the size of the staff and the facility. Because the church has a cradle to grave nurture and care responsibility it needs to have programs or the ability to meet every possible need for every possible person. If not people will leave and go somewhere where their needs will be met. Also, besides its own operational concerns a church has denominational concerns, identity, and reputation to maintain.

- A para-medical group and a para-church group has really only one objective and that is to save lives. Their emergency work is recognized and appreciated by the hospital and the church. A doctor does not have much ground to criticize how a volunteer administered first-aid because if they weren't there the person would be dead, just like a church does not have grounds to criticize the work of para-church groups for the same reason. However, some confusion comes and reason for criticism arises when the para groups move outside of their area of expertise and ability and into the area of the hospital or the church. For example, a volunteer first-aider can resuscitate a victim and maintain basic life support but does not have the training or the right to administer drugs or perform any procedure that is not necessary for basic survival. Neither should the para-church

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groups try and take over the role of the local fellowship or pastor, but rather always keep the singular objective of spiritual life and be sure to remain loyal to this. Para-church workers should work with all churches just like para-medics can bring patients to any hospital. Showing loyalty to the cause takes precedence over showing loyalty to a particular hospital or church, whatever the case may be. Bring the spiritually sick to wherever it is expedient, however if the patient requests being brought to a certain place then do, by all means. On the other hand, if a certain place is not able to meet the needs of the patient then you must by pass the one that is most expedient and bring them to a place where they can see restoration of their health.

*5 A hospital with its advertising, latest facilities, best staff, nicest rooms, best private benefits etc. is in reality competing for patients. A church also in one sense competes because membership is necessary for the operation of its programs. Often certain doctrinal issues, programs for all people, good facilities etc. are used in advertising and drawing people to the local church which sometimes creates competition among the churches. This competition, whether direct or indirect, causes outsiders to think that the local church is only out to propagate its own church body or denomination.

- A para-medical does not play favorites at the expense of one's health but simply brings patients to the hospital that is most expedient, thus the para-medical brings people to all hospitals. Because the para-medical interacts with all hospitals a patient is not suspicious of the para-medical's intentions when they bring him to a hospital, the patient trusts the para-medical to bring them to the place that is best for them. The same is true for the para-church worker. They must work with all churches and bring people to the church that is most expedient. This will give the para-church groups an unthreatening and unpropagating image and reputation among those outside the church, thus making way for opportunities to work among them. This attitude of not playing favorites will also result in the local churches asking the para-church group for help in their programs, knowing that by catering to the para-church group they themselves will benefit.

As spiritual para-medicals we need to:

- 1) be healthy ourselves, which means being a member of a local church.
- 2) keep up with our skills and training so that we are always ready to administer emergency spiritual aid.
- 3) be on-call and available, carrying around a spiritual beeper to be summoned by whoever needs us whenever they need us.
- 4) maintain our primary loyalty of seeing people saved. This of course can mean numerous strategies or involvement in virtually any type of activity. The criteria for determining your activities and strategies are: 1- keep them to a few, and do that well, to the point of becoming a prototype ministry for other groups and for the local church. 2- determine the special needs of the unsaved segment of the community and prayerfully seek to meet that need. 3- do an activity or meet a need that the local church is not doing or cannot do.