

# NINE NECESSARY FREEDOMS

**To see a wide-spread movement for Christ, congregations must  
enjoy these freedoms from religious traditions**

You may use this document as a guide to present these nine freedoms to a workshop of those who want to see their congregations and cells reproduce and multiply.

While one of you presents the nine ideas, another of you can play the role of Mr. Tradition. Mr. Tradition can wear a special hat or carry a sign with his name written in big words, "MR. TRADITION". Mr. Tradition's role is to object to every main idea that you will present. You can then answer his objections while others listen, or, better, you can ask the others to reply to Mr. Tradition. As you introduce Mr. Tradition to the workshop, you would say something like this, "Mr. Tradition probably attends your congregation. He is just about everywhere! Maybe, you are Mr. Tradition."



*Mister Tradition has a reason for denying every one of a church's God-given freedoms.*

## **1. Freedom for young congregations to start newer congregations as soon as the Lord makes it possible. Teachings:**

- Bible models who exercised this freedom include Barnabas and Epaphras.
- Everywhere biblical apostles went, new congregations started and multiplied.
- The apostles kept new congregation work free from the required use of buildings and salaries.

**Mr. Tradition argues something like this:** "Our congregation policies require that for a congregation to start another congregation, it must first apply to our regional headquarters for approval, have a certain number of members and years of maturity, and a substantial budget."

**2. Freedom to obey the commands of Christ and his apostles above and before all man-made religious rules and traditions. Teachings:**

- Peter and the other apostles in Acts 2 taught the members of the first New Testament congregation to obey Christ from the beginning.
- Jesus commanded many things, which we can summarize in the seven basic commands that we see the 3,000 new believers in the first congregation obeying in Acts 2. They repented and received the Holy Spirit, confirmed their faith with baptism, celebrated the Lord's Supper, loved one another (seen in their fellowship), prayed, gave and made disciples.

**Mr. Tradition argues something like this:** "We must all follow the same policies — those that I approve. Conformity ensures unity."

**3. Freedom to visit homes of unconverted seekers and new believers to evangelize, make disciples and worship within their own cultures and families. Teachings:**

- Bible models include Peter with Cornelius and Jesus when he sent out the seventy.
- When someone believed, they immediately went to their families and friends, as in the case of Levi, Cornelius, Lydia, the Philippian jailer and Crispus.
- They kept new believers in a loving relationship with their kin and social network as much as possible.

**Mr. Tradition argues something like this:** "Separate new believers immediately from the bad influence of friends, relatives and culture!"

**4. Freedom to baptize new believers without delay and to celebrate the Lord's Supper wherever they meet. Teaching:**

- Bible models include Christ and the Jerusalem congregation in Acts 2:38-47.

**Mr. Tradition argues something like this:** "Baptism and the Lord's supper are performed only by ordained clergy. Baptismal candidates must first walk on water."

**5. Freedom to serve one another in the Body of Christ as intimate, loving congregations and cells, using all the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given to them. (1 Corinthians 14:24-26) Teaching:**

- Bible models include the Corinthians.
- The Holy Spirit gives to all new believers certain spiritual gifts, so that they can serve one another.
- No clergyman or deacon has all the spiritual gifts necessary to build up congregations.

**Mr. Tradition argues something like this:** "Do all things in decency and order. And the order is what I say it is! Only educated clergy should lead public meetings."

**6. Freedom to provide pastoral leadership by those who meet the NT qualifications of elders, with or without salaries. Teaching:**

- Bible models include Paul and Titus.
- Some non-biblical qualifications include theological education, financial strength, social position, ethnicity, and language. What are some non-biblical criteria in your tradition?

**Mr. Tradition argues something like this:** “Our congregation’s by-laws require pastors to be ordained. Our by-laws list 750 requirements that they must meet first. They must have the specified academic degrees and receive the salary of a professional.

**7. Freedom to apply any New Testament method of preaching and teaching God’s Word according to each group’s size and its leaders’ maturity. Teaching:**

- Bible models include the New Testament ‘one another commands’ and Jesus’ conversational style.

**Mr. Tradition argues something like this:** “God has ordained oratorical preaching of the Word for this age. We need top quality and excellence in the pulpit.”

**8. Freedom for those who train shepherds to respond to immediate needs of new congregations and leaders. Teaching:**

- This requires a curriculum with a menu that offers options so that new leaders and mentors can select studies and activities that correspond to each new congregation’s current needs.
- Christ taught in response to current situations and immediate needs. Paul told Titus to deal with what was lacking in the new congregations of Crete.
- New congregations all have different needs.

**Mr. Tradition argues something like this:** “My training program has a standard curriculum and every student studies the same thing, starting in the same place and following the same path. What they learn is for some future application.”

**9. Freedom to provide regional coordinators who supervise new and congregations and trainers of shepherds, as Paul instructed Titus (Titus 1:5). Teaching:**

- There is no biblical example of an independent local congregation.
- A frequent cause of new congregations that fail, is that their leader neither sought nor received oversight and counsel from a more experienced leader.

**Mr. Tradition argues something like this:** “We do not want any godless hierarchy or bishops dictating to the congregations what to believe and do. We hold to the autonomy of the local church.”  
**Or:** “I’m the Bishop named as supervisor of this area, and I do not want any new coordinators exercising authority in my area of jurisdiction. Nor have I time to coordinate any new programs! So we shall continue doing as we do.”