

**** MAY 2017 ****

ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH

Some reflections from the word of God on the Commission after a six week mission trip to Nigeria, Finland, Estonia, Northern Ireland and England.

The Knowledge of the Glory of YAHWEH

The challenge for all of us in the great restoration of the church that God is bringing to pass in every nation on the earth is to stay on target. The target is adequately expressed in **Habakkuk 2:14** "*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of YAHWEH, as the waters cover the sea*". Therefore we are to grow in the knowledge of the glory of the Eternal God, and through the thorough practice of discipleship, to make His glory known. If we will make disciples of the word of God, who are then able to make disciples, the knowledge of the glory will spread around the globe.

LIVING IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

On the day of Pentecost "*Those who gladly received his word were baptised; and that day about three thousand souls were added. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers*" **Acts 2:41-42**. Jesus had so trained His disciples that by the time He was ready to go to the Father, He was able to pray to the Father that "*these men you have given Me out of the world (Jn.17:6)* are now ready to be sent as apostles into the world (**Jn.17:18**). {Note that the word for *sent* in **verse 18** is the Greek verb *apostello*, which is the basis of the word *apostle*.} The first apostles were ready to establish Christian Community because they had been taught and trained by Jesus to live in the kingdom of God, and once the Holy Spirit had come they were able to flesh this out.

The new converts were baptised into the body of believers [120] (**Acts 1:15**). This large body of people, led by the apostles were able to continue in a very real expression of Christian Community as summarised in **Acts 2:43-47**.

GRACE AND APOSTLESHIP

Romans 1:5 says that, "*Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name*". This is the God-given means to do the work of discipleship in the nations. Grace and apostleship is outworked in making disciples. It is discipleship in action.

A disciple is primarily a devoted learner who is attached to the teacher. This in summary is the Biblical model. Jesus as the discipler, modelled the life of a disciple living in the kingdom of God. The disciples saw and experienced His life-style, His faith, His prayer life; the way He treated people, especially His compassion for the multitudes and the full inclusion of women in ministry, and many other things.

The gift of the apostle, combined with and expressed through grace is the means by which we can effectively make disciples (**see Acts 14:26**). As one of my brothers has said, '*All I need is one true disciple in a nation and then we can take the nation*'. It only takes one fully

trained disciple, who has been sent out in the ministry to repeat what they have experienced and learnt, to influence a whole nation.

Discipleship

Discipleship is much more than teaching the Scriptures, even though this is the essential ingredient. Jesus said, "*Go and make disciples of all the nations teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you*" (Matt.28:19-20). The word *observe* is the key word. We are to teach the disciples how to observe the word, not just teach them the word. As James says, "*Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves*" James 1:22.

The word OBSERVE

This is a very interesting word. It is #S.C. 5083. It means: *to watch over, to preserve, keep, hold fast; to guard by keeping an eye upon*. It is translated: *keep [x57], reserve [x8], observe [x4], watch, preserve, hold fast*. "*He who is born of God keeps himself*" (1Jn.5:18). Paul said "*I have kept the faith*" (2Tim.4:7). Jude addresses those who are "*preserved in Jesus Christ*" (Ju.v.1). Many times when the word is translated *keep*, it is in the context of keeping the commandments.

Lifestyle discipleship

We are to teach the disciples to "*observe all things*"; this is what Jesus commanded us to do. This is more to do with lifestyle discipleship, than just teaching the word. We have observed in the nations that many have taught disciples and the disciples have become fluent in the word, but there has been a lack of training in the lifestyle. We have not given due attention to the command of Jesus to teach the disciples to **observe** all things that He has commanded us; we have tended to teach the word only.

The disciple is to become like the teacher. Jesus said, "*A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher*" Lu.6:40. (also see Matt.10:24-25). Paul was able to say of Timothy, "*But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance*" 2Tim.3:10. Timothy was fully taught and trained in lifestyle discipleship. This is what is needed in the apostolic restoration world-wide.

SHORING UP THE FOUNDATIONS

A building cannot be fully built unless the foundations have been properly laid. Let us revisit "*the first principles of the oracles of God*" (Heb.5:12). The goal is to "*go on to perfection*" (Heb.6:1), but we need a permit from God to do that (v.3), and that permit will not be given unless "*the elementary principles of Christ*" (Heb.6:1) have been properly laid.

The first principle is **repentance from dead works**. In preaching after the healing of the lame man, Peter said "*Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ who was preached to you before*" Acts 3:19-20. Repentance leads to the remission of sins! And conversion means a different lifestyle. Repentance fundamentally

means change, and the result of repentance and change is not only remission of sins, but the promise of "*times of refreshing*".

And not only that: the times of refreshing are to prepare us for the coming of the Lord and the Lord is not coming until "*the times of restoration of all things*"(Acts 3:21). Repentance is the beginning of our preparation for the coming of the Lord and that means that we are fully involved in the restoration of all things "*that God has spoken through the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began*" (Acts 3:21).

The second principle is **faith toward God**, and faith is the means by which we live 'in another kingdom' (**Rom.14:17** & **Rom.10:17**). Faith replaces dead works with the reality of hearing and obeying the word of God.

The third principle is **baptism**: "*Buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*" **Rom.6:4**. Through baptism we become fully a new creation and we walk in that newness of life in Christ, having been joined to His body.

The fourth principle is the **laying on of hands**. We learn from **Acts 19:1-6** that anyone who has been baptised should have also received the Holy Spirit. Peter confirms this also in **Acts 2:38** "*You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*". The Holy Spirit is imparted through the laying on of hands. He enables the believer to speak in tongues and to prophesy (**Acts 19:6**). The receiving of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands is a necessary foundation that must be laid so that the believers can be built up in their faith (**Jude v.20-21**) and be empowered to witness (**Acts 1:8**) and to understand the mysteries of the gospel (**1Cor.14:2**).

The fifth principle is the **resurrection of the dead**. Jesus said to Martha, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die*" **Jn.11:25-26a**. Resurrection life is not talking primarily about a life in heaven, but it is talking about a life now in the earth, living and walking by faith in the resurrected Lord and Saviour, Jesus the Messiah.

The sixth principle is **eternal judgement**: believe or perish! (**Jn.3:16**). We often think of eternal judgement as something to worry about in the future, but James warns us that every decision we make should be made in submission to God and we only go ahead when we know it is the Lord's will (**James 4:13-17**). James says, "*To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin*" (v.17).

Jesus warns us that for every idle word we speak we will "*give account of it in the day of judgement. For by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned*" (**Matt.12:36-37**). Therefore we live in eternal judgement every day according to what we speak and what we do.

The word *PRINCIPLE*

The word 'principle' that is used in **Hebrews 5:12** is the Greek word S.C. #4747 *stoicheion*. This word refers to something set in orderly arrangement. It refers to how people act, whether they follow the dictates of the world (**Col.2:8** & **20**) or whether they follow the

principles of the word of God (**Heb.5:12 & 6:1-2**). All the other uses of the word in the New Testament refer to worldly things: things in disobedience to God, but in **Hebrew 6:1-2**, the six principles listed are the very basis of understanding the word of God. These principles of the word of God must be established and functioning in our lives so that we can go on to perfection, that is, to full maturity.

AN EMPHASIS ON EVANGELISM

On returning to Australia from the mission trip, and especially from our visit to the Drop Inn ministry in Northern Ireland, led by Ronnie Dawson, I felt a quickening to emphasise evangelism in our local work here in home base, in Toowoomba, Australia. We have embraced the five-fold ministries of **Ephesians 4:11** since our inception in 1998. We have tried and have had some success in tapping the prophetic ministry and we are satisfied that God is releasing that ministry more and more among us. In that light we have commissioned some prophets.

We have recognised the ministry gift of pastor and have ordained a number of pastors. We have recognised the ministry gift of teacher and have commissioned a number of teachers. Our ministry is the fruit of God calling me to the apostolic ministry back in 1997 and since then other apostles have been raised up among us and sent to the nations. As well many apostles have been raised in various nations.

We have made efforts to evangelise. Teams regularly go on the streets of our city witnessing. Some find it easy to make new contacts and share with them the word of God. But in it all, God is quickening the need and the expectation in our hearts of a fresh approach to evangelism and asking God to raise up that ministry among us.

A very clear example of the commission to evangelism and what we can expect when we obey that commission is given to us in **Mark 16:15-20**

- Firstly we are to **preach the gospel to the lost**
- Secondly we are to **baptise those who believe**, and to warn those who do not believe of their condemnation.
- Thirdly we are to **see the believers released in signs**: to cast out demons, to speak with new tongues, to take up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly it will by no means hurt them; and to be able to lay hands on the sick and see them recover.
- Fourthly we are to understand that **the Lord has ascended into heaven** and is sitting at the right hand of God, overseeing the great work of the gospel in the earth.
- Fifthly **the Lord works with those who go out preaching**, confirming the word through the accompanying signs.

This is fundamentally the Bible way of evangelism. Yes there are many other aspects of evangelism through witnessing; through house churches functioning in the localities where they are based, but all of this is to be in the light of the Great Commission in Mark: preach, baptise and equip.

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An expression of God's purpose by an apostle in Kenya:

This is what we have heard clearly from God, He is out for the first fruits, those He wants to completely resurrect from dead works so that they become the sample church, (church out of church) to demonstrate the life of Christ on earth so that the reality of the church can not only be systems or lessons but a life

lived on a daily basis. A life that is by itself producing its kind to forming a body that can be best be defined by the observers as CHRIST-like Community. Briefly this is what is happening in our apostolic company. Shalom.