



Ferguson Report



Vol. 4 No. 12

“Go ye unto all the world”

December 2007

God Bless our Supporters

The end of each year is always a time for serious reflection for all that God has done. As the 2007 year draws to a close, I am amazed and encouraged at the good that has been accomplished by our mighty God through the faithful works and sacrifices of His people. Through the cooperative works of many congregations and thousands of Christians seven preacher training schools are in operation on four continents preparing men to carry the gospel of Christ to their communities. And during the training of these men, souls have been saved, churches have been established, and God’s people have been educated in His word and strengthened.

But without YOU none of this could be possible. Your prayers, encouragement, hard work, and financial support have been the back-bone through which God has created and sustained our efforts. In behalf of the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver, the Chimala Bible College, and the CSMT School of Biblical Studies, thank-you for your love and support that has made the year of 2007 the best ever! May God continue to bless you and yours for the New Year of 2008!

Howell

Call for Oneness in 2008

The turning of the calendar to 2008 apparently promises to produce more of the same sad miseries in this world as has been witnessed in the past. Daily media reports of the number of deaths due to suicide bombers and roadside bombs in Iraq and Afghanistan tend to callous us against the horrible realities of war. Within a week, the occurrence of two tragic events illustrates the misfortune produced by people who are at odds with one another. The assassination of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the 300-plus Kenyans reportedly killed following election results continually remind us of the consequences of political rivalry and ethnic competition. The flawed theory to “agree to disagree” that is being touted by the misinformed can be lived out neither peacefully nor realistically in the world. This is the case because of our inability to see eye to eye on much of anything among ourselves.

As a result, we frequently cannot “walk together” because we cannot agree (Amos 3:3). Instead of seeking harmony, we emphasize differences and call for others to “take our side” in an effort to increase our presence with numbers. The outcome is tension frequently leading to either exclusion or physical conflict.

The threats, hatred, and violence that fill so much of our world give evidence to our inability to unify ourselves. The period of the Hebrew “Judges” has frequently been cited to expose the unwelcome reality when “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6; 21:25). Anarchy and violence were the sad results of that dark period in Israel’s history. Is unity, then, even possible in a divisive world? Not as long as you or I am left to decide the standard by which to produce it.

This was apparently the subject Paul had in mind as he penned the following words: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). But, how can this be accomplished when each person has his own “mind” (opinion)? Must you surrender your opinion to me? Must I acquiesce to you? Who decides? The answer is each of us must be willing to **give up** our own mind **for the mind of God!** Listen to this idea expressed by the following two passages of divine inspiration: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5); and “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16). Jesus said that what He had received of the Father—God’s will, He would make known to the apostles through the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14:26; 15:15). And what the apostles had received of Jesus would be written by the apostles for instruction to the churches (cf. John 20:30, 31; Eph. 3:4; 1 Cor. 14:27; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; 1 John 5:13; Rev. 1:3). Consequently, all the churches would have the **same mind** because they had received their teaching from the One and same divine source. In this way, the unity Jesus prayed for could become a reality: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as

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thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20, 21).

The unity that exists between God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is the only basis for unity that will ever unite people today. Anything more, less or different is doomed to fail (cf. Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12). Only to the extent that we take God’s book—the Bible as the authoritative and verbally inspired word of God will any nation, race, or tribe of people find lasting peace and unity. Nowhere else can it be found.

And equally important is the use of proper reasoning to understand what God’s word means to people. It is the height of dishonesty not to give the very words of God the same treatment commonly employed to draw out the meaning of other historical works. Therefore, it is not enough just to have God’s word in our possession; we must also properly and fairly interpret those very words. How important is that? The destiny of our very own souls is at stake not to mention the peace that can come to our families, our tribes, and our nations.

And finally, love must be included in the mix. Before listing the “seven ones” of religious unity, Paul prefaces his topic with these words: “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3).

Without manifesting a genuine willingness to seek peace, unity can never be found. Love has to be at the forefront before any worthwhile unity will ever be achieved.

The world flounders in an attempt to find unity. Neither the United Nations nor the Peace Corps can provide it. It begins first by seeking our Creator – God. This is the work of preaching: pointing people to Jesus who said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). Let us look more to Jesus and His word for 2008 and do a better job showing the world the way to true and lasting peace and unity.

Howell

Our Purpose in Tanzania

Operating on a mission field is a great challenge any way you look at it. The Chimala Mission has weathered many storms in its nearly-fifty-year history. Keeping the mission afloat amidst ever-changing economic and political changes, however, is a recurring challenge to its very existence. As an important part of the Chimala Mission, the Chimala Bible College seeks to train men to teach their own people. With the program offered by the Bear Valley Bible Institute, we are able to provide high caliber training with high academic integrity while zealously holding to sound doctrine. If you are looking for a worthy program to support, please contact us. Howell