

## **Replenish! Christchurch's Approach to Discipleship**

Two times in Scripture God gave the command to replenish the earth. One command is given to Adam and Eve: *"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth"* (Genesis 1:28). The other command came after the flood and was given to Noah and his family: *"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth"* (Genesis 9:1). In Hebrew the word replenish is *malae* which means, "be full of, in a wide application (literally and figuratively): --accomplish, confirm, + consecrate, be at an end, fill, fulfill, go, (over-) flow, fullness, furnish, gather together, satisfy, set, space, take a (hand-) full, + have wholly." As passed down to us it means to fill again or refresh. This morning is the beginning of our discipleship series, entitled "Replenish." Our desire is to obey the Great Commission: *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen"* (Matthew 28:19,20). A few months ago while Michael Dickinson and I were discussing the viability of organizing the church into a discipling band of brothers and sisters, he came up with a splendid, biblical name to our program: Replenish! Gathering our dreams and definitions together, our mission is to fill the space God has given us (which can encompass our local area as well as the uttermost part of the earth) with true converts, who in turn, search, find and make true converts, who in turn, search, find and make true converts of the Lord Jesus Christ also. We want what we do to affect us, our children, our children's children and all people with whom God places us in contact. In Acts 11:26, it reads, *"...And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch"* (Acts 11:26). We see from this statement, God intends for all Christians to be disciples. Malachi 2:15 says, *"And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed..."* Since we are referred to as Christ's bride, the analogy of marriage would mean that our goal should be, as a result of our union with Christ, to see to it that we present our Lord with a godly seed. May God help us to replenish the earth! This is a call for us to:

### **1. Reciprocate**

Jesus said, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). Christ was rejected by the world He loved, yea, even created. He was tortured in both soul and body for us. He died the death of a criminal in our place. He was buried and rose again defeating once and for all the effect of sin's curse on us, his disobedient creation, by His precious shed blood. In those days before He ascended to the throne of His Father, He told his disciples to go and win others telling and teaching them what He did for us. May we then take the next step by telling and teaching what He taught us. Why must we disciple? We do so because we love and appreciate what Christ did for us. After all He who loves us asked us to do this. *"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you"* (John 20:21).

### **2. Imitate**

We cannot reproduce what we do not have. This is perhaps one of the holdbacks of discipleship in the local church. We must own the product before we can sell it effectively. We must be wholly dedicated to Jesus as Lord in our life if we are going to convince others. Paul gave a clear, simple and yet possibly incriminating command when he said, *"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ"* (I Corinthians 11:1). The word *followers* is the Greek word: "mimetes," from where we get our word "mimic." It can also be translated imitate. The great Apostle laid his own testimony on the line. He was saying "Okay, I am asking you to follow me." I liked what my dad often said, "Follow me as I follow Christ, but no further." Let us strive to be real in our walk with Christ! We must be genuine disciples, if we are to effectively disciple others.

Do not become discouraged with this awesome task. Let this series be a time of evaluation and

spiritual renewal. If we believe these great doctrines, if we love the Lord Jesus, then let's give Christ our all-in-all. Don't sit idly by; let us rise to the occasion, step up to the task, take up the cross and follow Jesus!

And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27).

### **3. Propagate**

Some grow despondent when they attempt to be soul winners and disciplers when their effort at first seems to bear no fruit. Let me remind you of the Scripture that says, "*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*" (Galatians 6:9). Dr. Oswald J. Smith said, "Christ did not send us to Christianize, He sent us to evangelize." It is our duty to be a witness; only God can save a soul! Therefore, let us understand that we are merely the newsboys, getting the news that others made out to the public. We are not the chefs; we are the waiters, getting the bread to the table while it is hot.

What an honor to be entrusted with this Great Commission! What a blessing to be in partnership with Christ! "*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*" (Isaiah 52:7).

### **4. Duplicate**

Once I was in conference with a dear, well-meaning brother who was telling us that his goal was to have a Bible college where he would be duplicating himself in the lives of the young preacher-boys. What he was saying was not totally wrong, if we go back to Paul asking people to follow him as he followed Christ. Later that night after the service, I said to my friend, "You are short-changing your students. Paul earnestly pled, "*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you*" (Galatians 4:19). Therefore, would it not be a better goal to have Christ as our model?" He very kindly agreed. I say this to relieve any anxiety you may have of thinking, what if I blow it, don't do a good job, or backslide. Remember God said, "*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it*" (Isaiah 55:11).

May we follow the principle that one of the definitions of replenish carries, which means to fill again, refresh. It means to do it again. We are not making grandchildren of God; we are bearing witness and discipling children of God. The people to whom we minister have the same one-on-one relationship with Jesus Christ as we do. The duplication is of Christ, (thank God!) not us!

Our prayer is "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 2:5).

- Pastor Pope -

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