

(THE BOOK OF ACTS & YOU: PART 3 – OUR FIRST RECOURSE

WHEN we look into the Book of Acts, we see disciples who were enamored with and beholden to their Mentor. Their minds were no longer on themselves, but on the One who had left the epitome of power and influence to come to Earth and live as a human being, being subject to like passions as we, then to give His life so that others may live – for all eternity. This total focus on their Lord, Master and Teacher was one of the keys of success of the Early Church!

We will see, when we come to Chapter 4, that the healing that occurred was attributed to Jesus Christ. Why? These men had died to their ego! We may have thought that we have died to our ego. The act and practice of "mortifying the flesh" – putting to death the flesh with all of its human nature – is lauded among followers of Jesus, but seldomly practiced continually. Give a little knowledge and a little power to some preachers, pretty soon they are all impressed with their ability – which they did not have in the beginning. It is not long before they are acting as if they are above the average person, as if they are among the elite of God. They become part of an elite class system that Christ never intended for the ministry (see Matthew 20:20-28). Gone is the humility to accept the advice and counsel from a "mere layman" – the class system has invaded the ministry of God, which is an oxymoron.

Paul addressed this when he asked the Corinthians: "What do you have that you did not receive?" As we study the pages of Scripture, we are astonished to see that even the need for the desire to repent has to be provided. See Romans 2:4.

As the people of God, we have to come to the place to see that it's not about us, but about Him (the True Jesus), and this same Jesus living in us and working through us.

Some will say, as they see some beginning to be active once again in God's Work, "Leave this alone. Christ is going to do the Work!" What they actually may mean is that some leaders in corporate groups who have organized themselves into some kind of humanly devised association will do the Work of God today. They also imply that humble black ministers in Darkest Africa and mere laymen have no place in this work, because, after all, is it not a White Man's cause?!

My dear friend, you and I would not have entered into the COG community had it not been for a lay woman who talked to another lay person about this Way of life. That lady's name is Ora Runcorn. Today the ministry would probably pay no attention to some woman's advice. Something happened later on in our history with the ministry where they went and dug up their ego and began to use it again. We all should have remembered to "die daily".

What these people forget is that their mentor taught them via radio, television and in church services that we are indeed Christ's feet and hands in this world. Even though we are not in the role of "the Vicar of Christ" – which is the height of arrogancy, but God does use the weak of the world to confound the wise.

The Book of Acts teaches us that we must use another part of our body to begin to do the "works of Jesus" – see John 14:12. We must go forward on our knees.

That brings us precisely to where the disciples were in the beginning. On their knees, supplicating God the Father and Jesus, whom they knew, at the right hand of God.

In our age, apostasy came knocking at the door. What did most do? Most, like frightened sheep, panicked and reacted emotionally. The call to prayer was not there. In fact, one minister, after being exposed to the NOG explanation, complained that he did not know to whom he was praying any more. (The "NOG" was a term that we called the so-called "Nature of God" issue. It was the apostate attempt to introduce a false "Nature of God" explanation that was beyond the Bible, and had, as its source, the ancient Greek concept of the divine nature.) We were asked to accept various platonic ideas of God. Was it a Being with form and shape, or was it a cosmic cloud? No wonder the scattered and confused sheep got scattered, if their leaders were not in contact with the True God! However, to be fair, during the height of the apostasy onslaught, we were all confused to one degree or another, and we began to learn to judge without being judgmental. Some of these confused ministers did eventually come to a better understanding.

We desperately need to do as the early disciples did. They were confused too, but not so confused that they would follow self-proclaimed gurus. They knew that their only recourse was prayer and to do as their Master had instructed them.

God honored that, and they received the Holy Spirit that would lead them into all truth.

Is the Book of Acts exciting? Yes, and more. It has the keys to what the people of God should be doing now. And, what is more exciting, the True Jesus is waiting at the door, waiting for your invitation for Him to come in. Not only come into your life, but into the life of the Church, for centuries asleep to the job that still needs to be done.

As we go through the highlights of this exciting Book, we will see the answer popping out at us with extreme clarity, IF we seek the answers after much prayer and supplication.

– J. Graham Davies