

# **CELL NOTES**

## **For Jeremy Carruthers' talk on 9 September 2007**

### **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND MISSION**

#### **1) Introduction**

In my view BCF leadership style tends to be mature and non-directional, leaving huge room for personal growth, initiative and creativity on the part of the members. It takes courage for leaders to keep their hands off practical matters – as it is often easier to be seen to be doing something and to sort things out directly. However in the early church, when there was a problem with distribution of assets, the apostles basically said “You sort it out”.(Acts 6,1-4)

The mission statement “Equipping Christians to build churches to change our world” is a boundary description encompassing much of what we do, and within this boundary there is room for plenty of initiative. And we have some great ones already. My question is what works are we going to bring into this mission?

- What do you appreciate in BCF?
- And what would you love to see?
- What, for you, are the hallmark activities of a healthy church?
- Do you think we are doing these?

#### **2) How do we use the freedom we have?**

Mahatma Ghandi said: “Be the change you want to see in the world.” In our family we say: “If you want action, take action.” In other words, if you want the ketchup, go and get it. If you want to be part of a praising, worshipping community, be a praise person yourself. If you want to see renewal in the church and revival in the community, be filled with the Holy Spirit yourself. We have the freedom and the responsibility to address the gaps we see. We can sort it out. We can be pro-active.

- Do you subscribe to this view?
- What stops you?
- What can you do about it?

#### **3) Identifying mission**

Jesus saw his mission as “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed”

The Anglican church, for example, has taken this and developed its mission as

- \* To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom
- \* To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- \* To respond to human need by loving service
- \* To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- \* To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of the earth

- Do any of these activities resonate with you? Does your work involve activities such as these? Are you clear that the activities you spend your life doing are the ones you are called to?

### 3) **How we can identify our ministry, and receive the power to fulfil it.**

“It’s not the church of God that has a mission, but the God of mission that has a church.” We can be involved in our Father’s business. It is the Holy Spirit that imparts God’s vision.

We will never be fully effective if we are living short of our faith. In reality, embracing God’s mission for our lives may involve on the one hand laying down/letting go/repentance and on the other taking up/embracing/faith/receiving.

We let go of: independence from God, doing things our own way, the flesh, selfishness, old ways of doing things, sin, mediocrity, darkness.

We take up: the Kingdom, being led by the Holy Spirit, Jesus’ way of doing things, wholeheartedness, transformation, a renewed mind.

You can see this business of laying down and taking up so clearly in baptism, in Jesus’ life, in the disciples in Paul. It is the Holy Spirit that makes the difference.

Jesus said he laid down his life only to take it up again (John 10.17). It seems to me that He was pro-active about this. He went down into the water, came up, and was immediately filled with, and led by the Spirit. It was the anointing of the Holy Spirit that defined his ministry (see above).

He spoke of the grain of wheat being unfruitful unless it fell to the ground and died. And he embodied his own message by pro-actively going to the cross and laying down his life – and then receiving it back again and ascending to heaven. The Father glorified him by sending the Holy Spirit to all, near and far, young and old, everyone who would believe and receive. Hooray!

Peter and the disciples were hiding in a locked room, when they were filled with the Spirit, marking the start of the church’s ministry. And, as with Jesus, the Holy Spirit led them (Acts 13.2, 16.6).

Paul was literally floored by the light from heaven and after he received the message he got up and his life was completely changed.

We live in an age that is bounded: in the past by Jesus’ ascension, and in the future by his return. Throughout this age we have the Cross behind us, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming in front of us and the Holy Spirit upon us. The promise is for all flesh. We can choose whether to live in these realities, or to distance ourselves from them. Let’s believe in the One the Father has sent

Will we pro-actively and intentionally lay down our lives, and take them up again in the power of the Spirit? When the Son of man comes, may he find faith on the earth.

- Are you clear about the role of the Holy Spirit in your life? Do you need to become clearer?
- Is there anything you would do well to lay down at this stage in your life?
- Is there something you would like to take up?