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Monthly HC thoughts, 'Feel after Him'

2012-10-28, John Fenn, www.supernaturalhousechurch.org

Hi everyone,

As Barb and I have traveled these past 7 1/2 months and visited many house churches, we see common elements no matter the country or language, culture or customs. The common elements are the family of Christ, the sense of extended family and community, just as we see in Acts and in Paul's letters.

It's been so rich to take people on many of these trips, or have them meet us at the destination, or they invested in the time and money to travel to our meetings - wonderful in every way! The commonality of family and instantly knowing we are each on the 'same spiritual page' is amazing.

But we also have seen the processes a body goes through to become centered on that sense of family and community, and it is those processes that vary, though still remaining consistent with human nature being what it is, and the devil what he is.

Feel after Him

In Acts 17: 16-31 Paul told the elders of the (pagan) city of Athens that he could identify their unknown god as the God who made all things. In Greek, 'unknown god' is 'agnostos theos', where we get 'agnostic'.

He told them that his God made the world and all therein, and all mankind with the various nations, and knew ahead of time and even determined their borders and the times of their rising and falling. He said of one blood He made all nations in the hopes "they would feel after Him and find Him". v27

The Greek word for 'feel after' is 'pselaphao', and means "to feel or grope about". The root 'psao' means 'to touch'. It is used in Luke 24:39 where after His resurrection Jesus says: "Look at my hands and my feet! It is I myself, touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

Struggles

It occurred to me how much house church is accomplished by 'feeling after Him' which feels more like 'groping about' at times. Some people who visit are rather 'agnostos theos' about us, about visiting a strangers home, about house church...it is unknown to them.

I think back to our middle son's description of Army training called 'reconnoitering'. They would drop several teams of soldiers over hundreds of acres of woods, each with a map of their destination and little else, with just instructions to meet at the location on the map 2 or 3 days later.

Imagine teams of soldiers all spread out over hundreds of acres of forest, too far from each other to hear or see each other, yet all trying to make their way to a common goal. They would feel their way, grope about, scavenge what food they could, holding first and foremost in their minds their common goal.

But they first had to find out where in the world they were. They could see their goal, but were confused about where they had been dropped off. So the first order of business was figuring out where they were.

Such is house church. At first, and I mean for the first year or two, it is confusing just figuring out where you have been 'dropped off'. You see the goal, but where in the world are you, and where do you go from here?

Many people from all sorts of backgrounds over time formed into a team, a family in Christ, trying to get to the goal of maturity in Him - and feeling and groping (at times it seems) their way towards maturity in Christ.

Time

What I found in the traditional church and in house church, is that people feel after God just to find out where they are, then they grope their way towards Him, but at points along the way for each of us, we must make a choice to make the right decision no matter what it feels like, but because it is towards our goal of maturity in Christ.

During our travels this year, and what I hear in Skype and Facebook Instant Messaging and such, I've had people say things like 'It took 2 years' and 'It's only now after a year that we are...' and '...after these 3 years we are just now becoming a family and community in the Lord...'

People will come and go, but those who want to mature in Christ, who want community and extended family in Christ, will become your core. I've seen seasons of a year or more for the Lord to whittle things down to a core group - before

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growth happens again.

House church is counter culture to the west, but it is the culture of Jesus. People need help as they feel their way to kingdom culture, for house church is a lifestyle where those we fellowship with are our top priority - let us realize people are groping, and help them with tender mercy and patience, for we are finding our way too.

Blessings!

John

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A personal note - a special thanks to those of you, individual or as a house church, who support us financially. Of the 10,000 or so people around the world reached weekly with my Weekly Thoughts, there are less than 600 people in a whole year who contribute financially.

That 600 includes those who contribute a donation and buy a cd/MP3 during the year. Even a small amount on a monthly basis makes such a difference. Thanks to those of you who do contribute, and know that you are prayed for and much loved.

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