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## *REAPING WHERE YOU BESTOWED NO LABOR*

I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor . . . (John 4:38).

As members of the human race we are prone to see things from a human point of view. From the human point of view, if it “sounds too good to be true . . . it probably is.” From the human point of view, you “pay for what you get.” From the human point of view, you “reap what you sow.”

Jesus, however, tried to give His disciples something other than a human point of view. When we are “born again” we no longer see things as we did before. Those who are born from above are citizens of a heavenly kingdom with perceptions in the spirit world not available to those who are merely born of the flesh.

Jesus sent out His disciples to reap that whereon they had bestowed no labor. Someone else had done the work . . . they reaped the harvest.

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As a training exercise He sent them forth with:

no gold

no silver

no brass

no wallet

no extra coat

no extra shoes

and no staff (Matt. 10:9-10).

When they returned they had found God to be faithful. All of the things which they so desperately needed had been graciously provided.

The Bible gives many examples of this spiritual principle.

When Philip stood by a deserted roadway between Jerusalem and Gaza, the Ethiopian eunuch came by. At the time he drew near to Philip, he was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. The man was ready to become a Christian, but Philip had virtually nothing to do with his preparation. He was ripe for harvest. In a short time he had been baptized into Christ and went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:26-40).

When Peter arrived at the household of Cornelius the whole family was eagerly awaiting the opportunity to become Christians. Someone else had done the work and Peter was merely reaping the harvest (Acts 10).

When Ananias was commissioned to preach to Saul of Tarsus, he didn't want to do it. He said,

Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name (Acts 9:13-14).

Ananias had nothing to worry about. God had already prepared Saul's heart. Saul even had received a vision of a man named Ananias laying hands on him that he might receive his sight. He was reaping that upon which he had bestowed no labor.

Saul himself would also become a beneficiary of this principle. We know him best not as Saul of Tarsus, but as Paul the Apostle. As Paul started out to witness for His Lord, he found at every juncture precisely the personnel and resources which he needed to be successful.

God pointed out Timothy to him through prophetic utterances (I Tim. 1:18).

God directed him to Troaz where he met Luke the beloved physician (Acts 16:1ff.).

God gave him a vision of a man from Macedonia pleading for help (Acts 16:9).

God sent an earthquake to bring about the conversion of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:19-40).

Paul himself would testify, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God" (II Cor. 3:5). Paul did not rely upon enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power (I Cor. 2:4).

## ETERNITY IN THEIR HEARTS

One of the most provocative books I have read in recent years is the excellent book, *Eternity in their Hearts*, by Don Richardson. Richardson became world famous when his book, *Peace Child*, was condensed in the *Reader's Digest*. He had also written *Lords of the Earth*, and is widely recognized for his anthropological and linguistic work among the Sawi people of Irian Jaya.

"Eternity in their hearts" is a phrase found in Ecclesiastes 3:11 which indicates that God has placed eternity in the hearts of men. Richardson relates more than twenty-five incredible, but true accounts of peoples all over the world who are eagerly waiting for someone to come and tell them of the One True God.

When Canadian Albert Brant and his colleague, Glen Cain, went to Ethiopia in 1948, their mission work was off to a running

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start. The reason . . . a man named Warrasa Wange, from the royal family of the Gedeo tribe, had received a vision. In his vision he saw two white men erect flimsy shelters under a large sycamore tree near his home in Dilla. Later they built shiny roofed structures. Eventually these structures covered the entire hillside. Wange had never seen anything up to this point but grass roofed huts. In the vision, Wange was instructed that these men would have a message from the One True God. When these white skinned missionaries put up their tent under a large sycamore tree near Dilla, they were in for a most pleasant surprise. They would reap that upon which they had bestowed no labor.

When William Marcus Young climbed out of a well that he was digging and spoke to representatives from the Wa tribe in Asia, he, too, was in for a pleasant surprise.

These Wa tribesmen were sent by their leader, Pu Chan, to search for a white man with a book from God. A pony had been saddled and released with the belief that it would lead them to the man they were seeking. They had followed the pony over 200 miles of mountainous trails to the city of Kentung. Here the pony had stopped by the very well which William Marcus Young was digging.

His granddaughter, Nelda Widlund, related to Richardson that the Wa messengers asked, "Have you brought a book of God?" When Young nodded they were so overcome with emotion that they fell at his feet and announced, "This pony is saddled especially for you. Our people are all waiting. Fetch the book! We must be on our way!" (p. 103).

Experiences like this are being repeated all over the world!

### DR. GARLAND BARE - THAILAND

Since Dr. Bare is a personal acquaintance of the Young family, and since he labored many years for Christ in the same area, I take the liberty of quoting him again at this time.

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Dr. Bare is at this time serving as a staff physician with the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Nebraska and will be well known to many who read this book. Our knowledge of him, his work, and his integrity, will be a strong confirmation of this principle.

In 1955, Brother Bare pioneered in evangelizing the Khamu tribe in the Nan Province of Northern Thailand. It was an area where the Gospel had never been preached, and as far as we know, there were no converts to Christ among the Khamu people. These people were noted for the intensity of their demon worship and were a rather withdrawn and reserved tribe. One might imagine that it would take many years to bring such people to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Brother Bare found otherwise.

On his initial visit, the headman of the village gave him permission to stay in his home. It was a typical dwelling for that part of the world, merely a thatched roofed hut elevated on stilts to protect you from wild animals.

After dark when the people of the village came in from the fields they gathered to hear the white man. Garland was wise indeed to "hear" before he spoke. He asked them about their beliefs and discovered that the primary focus of their worship involved evil spirits. These evil spirits were blamed for every illness, every natural disaster, every crop failure, and worship among the Khamu people consisted of attempting to appease these evil spirits.

"Are there any good spirits?" Brother Bare asked. "Yes!" they replied. There was a Good Spirit which their ancestors had told them about, but they had lost contact with Him.

He asked them if they knew where the world came from. They said that they did. They believed that there was a Great Creator God, but their ancestors had lost all the books about Him in a great flood . . . and they knew that this Creator Spirit was good.

Garland said, "I have good news for you. The Great Creator God has sent His Son to the earth to make contact with His people."

They responded with such excitement that they asked him to stay on in their village and tell them more. Within a month three families turned to the Lord . . . five more families soon followed. These were the first converts to Jesus ever among the Khamu people in Nan Province . . . and the harvest came from seeds planted in ages past.

### GIL CONTRERAS - MEXICO

When Gil Contreras started for Mexico City as a missionary almost 30 years ago, he knew only one person in that vast city . . . and she moved before he and his family arrived.

The success of the work is so much the result of God's work that Brother Contreras illustrates his ministry by telling the story of a flea riding upon the horn of a huge ox. When someone asked the flea what he was doing he replied, "We're plowing."

The work in Oaxaca opened up because a man from that area wrote repeatedly pleading for someone to come to them and preach.

The work in Veracruz was off and running when someone contacted Brother Contreras to inform him that some 50 people were waiting on him to come and baptize them.

It was my own good pleasure to visit the work among the Otomi Indians in the mountains above Mexico City. This was an area so violent that when a police officer arrived to restore the peace they shot him, tied him on his horse, and sent him back to town.

When the militia arrived the Indians merely vanished into the mountains and waited for them to leave.

Through the interpreter these people described to me the horrors of their life before the Gospel came.

Brother Contreras, however, was not the real pioneer in this particular work. He actually reaped what someone else had

sown. God arranged it so that literally hundreds of converts and several congregations were given over to him that he might teach them.

Gil and the Lord are "still plowing"!

### ZIDEN NUTT - AFRICA

The year was 1961. Twenty-five year old Ziden Nutt had only been two short months in Africa as a missionary when he took an interpreter and drove four hours into the bush for an historic meeting with an African Chieftan named Dendawa.

Chief Dendawa was the Paramount Chief over some 250,000 subjects and five wives. Six lesser chiefs served under his jurisdiction. He had earned the reputation of being inhospitable to Christianity for he had consistently turned down every church and every missionary that had asked his permission to enter the area.

One is never permitted to approach such a chief without following the proper protocol. Ziden had sent an appropriate gift in an appropriate way and waited for the chief to reciprocate. After some time Ziden's gift was accepted and he was granted an audience.

It was not a private audience, but all of the important men from the area were present. It was an august assembly of 600 or 700 men . . . all of them armed with axes and spears or other weapons.

Ziden felt a tenseness which seemed to run deeper than the normal barriers of language and culture. Later he would discover that virtually all of these men were opposed to letting a white man come into their area. They had never forgotten those stories of the slave traders who carried away their wives and children in a previous generation.

The chief, speaking through an interpreter, asked Ziden just two questions.

First of all he said, "Who is the head of your church?"

Secondly, "Who makes the laws for your church?"

The chief apparently possessed a discernment about denominationalism which was quite profound.

Ziden answered both questions in a straightforward and simple manner which he felt the chief would understand.

First of all, he explained that only God was the head of the church. The chief knew God at that time only as "Denga Denga" or the Spirit from Above. There was no earthly head or potentate to the church of the living God.

Secondly, he displayed to the chief a small Bible and explained that this book came from the Great Spirit and was the only rule of faith and practice which he would follow.

The chief immediately leaped to his feet and began shouting, "Where have you been . . . why didn't you come before?"

Further inquiry revealed that this chief had been waiting since 1937 for someone to come into his area who would answer those two questions in the way that Ziden did.

Today, this area which is now called "Chidamoyo" has some 105 indigenous congregations, five schools and a hospital.

Ziden is quick to give God the glory. He was reaping benefits which he did not sow.

We now know that at least a part of the groundwork and preparation for the work in Chidamoyo was done by courageous missionaries from Australia and New Zealand. In particular, Ziden feels a debt of gratitude to a missionary named Ray Knapp. It was he who taught Chief Dendawa's nephew the beauty of Jesus and the blessings of non-denominational Christianity. When Brother Knapp died the Africans honored his memory by inscribing the word "RUDO" upon his grave. This is their word for love.

Jesus Christ is the Head of His Body, the church. The members of that blessed Body circle the globe and span the centuries of time so that we are never isolated from those who have gone before, or those who will follow after.

Some of us plant . . . some of us water . . . but it is God who gives the increase!



## GERALD HOLMQUIST - BRAZIL

Gerald Holmquist is a veteran of more than 20 years on the mission field in Brazil. He told me recently of an experience in which he was able to reap where others had sown.

Gerald and his wife were working in Anapolis, but feeling that perhaps the time had come for them to move into another area. At this point, Gerald took a brief tour checking up on previous converts who had moved out of the area.

In the course of his journey he visited Samuel Carneiro de Castro who had moved to Itapuranga and was director of the local branch of the Bank of Brazil. Samuel begged him to come and start a work in Itapuranga. After considerable prayer, Gerald and his wife, Mary, answered that call. That was in April of 1985.

By the time that the Holmquists arrived on the field, Samuel had built and paid for a building that would seat 300 . . . He had printed invitations to 500 leaders in the community . . . and when Gerald arrived for their first church service on November 23, 1985, there were over 500 in attendance.

Someone else did the plowing, planting and cultivation . . . Gerald came to do the reaping . . . and God gave the increase.

## CAN GOD GIVE YOU GUIDANCE?

Yes! There is absolutely no question but what God can give you guidance. It may not do you any good, however, unless you are on the move. The controls on an airplane may work perfectly, but they do not affect the plane unless the plane is moving. A rocket doesn't need guidance until it blasts off.

Yes! God can give you guidance. Undoubtedly, He has given you guidance many, many times in the past. Sometimes we are not even aware of this guidance. We dig our toe in the dirt and cry "tough luck" without understanding that our wonderful God was trying to get our attention. We wipe our tears and ask "why?" when we ought to be smiling and saying "why not?"

## BEYOND THE VEIL

The greatest journey begins with a single step. Why not determine today to begin some venture in faith. Abram began his journey "not knowing where he was going." It was in the process of that journey that God guided him to the promised land.

Why not get on the move? We have a divine invitation to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus. Take that first important step . . . TODAY!

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER X

1. Why do you suppose Jesus sent out His Disciples without any provisions?
2. Why didn't God tell Abram where he was going before he left (Heb. 11:8)?
3. What good is guidance to something which is not moving?
4. What happens to that which is "ripe" but is not harvested? Is this also true of souls?
5. How do we as human beings communicate "nonverbally"?
6. How could God communicate with us "nonverbally"?
7. How can an experienced tracker follow a trail which others cannot see?
8. How can an experienced mechanic hear engine noises which others cannot discern?
9. How do we exercise our senses to discern good and evil (Heb. 5:14)?
10. If God wanted to lead us today to witness to someone who is ready to become a Christian, how would He do it?