

By Pastor Dave

Retooling to effectively reengage the people of our sphere of influence

"...so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:14-17 NIV

"For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure; they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Peter 1:3-9

"May the God of peace, ...equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Hebrews 13:20-21 NIV

Having purposed to put His Spirit in those who believe, and to equip them to be His instruments of rescue, release, and redemption; God's Church in 2009 remains His instrument of choice in seeing His plans carried out here on planet earth. Our times seem to be growing dark from the influences of our spiritual enemy, but between this army of evil intent and all humanity, is Jesus' Church – "greater is He who dwells in me, than He who is in this world."

(1 John 4:4) Shortly after God's plan to reach humanity through the sacrifice and resurrection of His Son; His followers needed a "retooling" in their thinking to precipitate the gathering of those known as Gentiles into His family. For a short time after the birth of the church only Jews had been reached with the good news of Christ, but God's plan was far greater than their thinking allowed them to act. Those outside the Jewish lineage were considered aliens and foreigners (Eph. 2:11-16.) No self respecting Hebrew would have ever thought a Gentile could become right with God, but God's plan was far greater than their paradigm. Two men, Peter and Cornelius, (Acts 10-11) had experiences with the Lord that initiated a new chapter in God's plan to include Gentiles into His family. His plan included using Jewish believers in Christ in order to make this happen. Before this could become reality, God had to "retool" Peter's thinking. Through the means of a vision God told him that he was to no longer view Gentiles as unacceptable to Him. The message of the dream was that all who believe in Christ can become the children of God. (Romans 10:12-13) This change of thinking was "monumental" and took

extraordinary actions on God's part to bring about such a radical shift in paradigm and behavior. The benefit of Peter's retooling experience is still realized today in all of us "Gentile believers." Yes, that's worthy of a "big God."

Today, many of Jesus' Church need as great a paradigm shift in our thinking as Peter experienced, only this time it has to do with God's plan to use all His children to be His instruments and not just a few "paid" professionals. Many of Jesus' Church are satisfied with a level of personal fruitfulness that falls way short of His desire, plan, and purpose. He wants all His followers to bear much fruit. (John 15) Our place is to believe Him to be true to His Word and pursue this call to be His instruments of "setting things right." (2 Cor. 6:7 TM) Deep in the heart of every one of His followers He has placed His DNA –the DNA to "make a difference;" to set the wrong things of this world right and turn right-side up all the up-side-down happenings and events of our life on planet earth. The community called New Life has been given a call to "be neighbors for life;" to be people who get involved in God's rescue efforts –who use the talents and some of the treasure He has given us to help others who have been turned "up-side-down" and broken by life. When we spend ourselves in this way, there will always be enough time and finances left over for ourselves and to continue helping others too. (see Luke 10) The scriptures I've written above speak clearly about God's heart to use His Word, LIFE training (through circumstances), and other followers of Jesus to train-us-up and equip us for life-giving service in Jesus' Church and among all those who surround our daily lives. We "New Lifers" have a mission to be "neighbors" and a promise that He will equip us with everything good for doing His will. Let's pray for laborers to be thrust into the harvest field and at the same time –roll up our sleeves. It's harvest time.