



Visie: Living and farming God's way

Missie: To grant every person in Africa who is part of the rural or farming community an opportunity to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to equip them with the knowledge and skills to practically live and farm according to biblical principles and values.

Contributions, letters and enquiries

AMOS, PO Box 17270
Bains' Vlei, 9338
Tel.: +27(51) 451 1874 / 981
Fax: +27(51) 451 1598
E-mail: sa@amosagrimin.com
training@amosagrimin.com

Homepage: www.amosagrimin.com

Banking details

First National Bank, College Court
Account: Amos Agrimin
Branch no.: 230-137
Account no.: 5299 000 8842

Editor

Hennie Viljoen

Design of Cover page

Leana Viljoen

Layout

Sunette Frylinck

Translation

Karen Botha

Production

Meshack Seatlholo

Published by

AMOS AGRIMIN

Regional manager Western Cape

Rev. JB Wessels Cell. 083 233 4533

Contact person Northern Cape

Neels de Waal Cell. 082 345 3771

National Co-ordinator Namibia

Jannie Wiese Cell. 00264 8127 1018
Wynand Burger Tel. 002 646 258 1623

National Co-ordinator Zimbabwe

Boet Pretorius

E-mail: boet@mweb.co.zw

ISBN: 978-1-920138-14-1

Contents

Part 1:	Living and Farming God's Way...	5
	Gratitude	
	Calling and Instruction	
	Love	
	Honour	
	Kingdom	
	Reject all Forms of Idolatry	
	Discipleship	
	Conclusion and Instruction	
Part 2:	What characterises God's Way?	19
	Radically Different	
	Through People	
	Unity and Cooperation	
	Open Hands	
	To Serve	
	Conclusion and commitment	
Part 3:	Relationships with people	44
	Do unto others as God does unto you	
	Put yourself in other people's position	
	Love your neighbour as yourself	
	Behave like Jesus	
	Be the first to confess your share of the blame for a problem	
	Conclusion and commitment	
Part 4:	Relationship to the land	54
	Living and Farming God's Way	
	... on God's land	
	... on land that God has reconciled to Himself	
	... on land over which Christ has authority	
	Conclusion and commitment	
Part 5:	The work we do	63
	Work is not a punishment for our sin	
	Work is a command from the Lord	
	Let love motivate you to do good work	
	Learn from the ant how to work	
	Work for the right reasons	
Part 6:	Let in those who are on the outside	72

Living and Farming God's Way

It's not a slogan, it's a lifestyle!

Basics

When I look at Africa and agriculture, I don't see what it is, but what it can become. I don't see famine, conflict, disease, destruction, chaos and poverty. Not because I close my eyes to the reality that is Africa, but because I look with different eyes – I look with the eyes of faith. I see what Africa and agriculture will look like when God is done with it. I see what Africa will look like when *Living and Farming God's Way* is not merely a slogan, but the lifestyle of millions of agriculturalists across Africa. I see Africa reflecting the greatness, goodness, justice, love and care of the Father at the time ordained by God. I see Africa in a restored relationship with God and how we as people of Africa take hands across all borders. I see God changing the way we as Africans think of our land to bring it in line with His Word. In Africa we will think anew of the labour we perform each day, and then God will feed Africa by blessing the work of our hands. The Lord will save millions in Africa in answer to our prayers. He will rejoice over Africa (cf. Zephaniah 3:17).

This is the power of a vision God puts in your heart: You see with different eyes and enthusiastically start building what you see! But the power of a vision also lies in the fact that everyone understands and lives the **basics** of the vision. If not, the vision will lose power. Then it degenerates into a nice slogan and never becomes a way of life.

Therefore, the purpose of the **BASICS** is:

- * to help you **understand** what *Living and Farming God's Way* is all about;
- * to challenge you to **evaluate** your life and your business and, if necessary, make **adaptations**. To get from where we are to where God wants us to be, demands continual change and growth;
- * to **equip** you to **explain** *Living and Farming God's Way* to other agriculturalists and to challenge them to commit themselves to it;
- * to help you **intercede with a purpose** – for yourself, but also for the entire rural and agricultural community.

May the study of and contemplation about **BASICS** inspire you to disciplined and focused prayer. May the LORD change, renew and enrich your life. May the example you set motivate many to start *Living and Farming God's Way* until Africa becomes what is must be.

My prayer for you is:

May the LORD show you what you must see;

May He teach you what you must know;

May He tell you what you must do, and

May He make you what you must be – His image and His representative!

Hennie Viljoen

Executive Chairperson-AMOS AGRIMIN

1

Living and Farming God's Way ... Living a life of gratitude!

Read: Colossians 2:6-7 and Hebrews 12:28

Where I come from and where I am heading, fills me with gladness and gratitude. I was a slave to sin and did just as I pleased. I allowed myself to be led by the leader of all powers of evil. The devil reigned in my life and I lived exactly like the sinful world. God would have had to punish me at some time or other for my sinful nature and dirty life because He is holy and hates sin. But He didn't do it. Instead, because of His love for me, He punished His own Son in my stead (Ephesians 2:1-10). Now the Cross of Christ is behind me, between me and my past. He has saved me from my sin, the power of the devil and God's punishment. He has placed me under His authority. He is my Saviour and reigns as King in my life. Therefore I already share in His Kingdom. I am filled with gratitude!

But the day is coming when God will finally deliver all who have been saved by Christ and belong to Him (Ephesians 1:14). He will invite them into His eternal Kingdom (Matthew 25:34). Then we will receive that which no-one has ever seen or heard of, that which no-one has ever thought of, as a gift from God (1 Corinthians 7:9). I am eternally grateful to have this expectation.

But my gratitude cannot be fully expressed by merely saying, *thank you*. I want to demonstrate my gratitude. I can think of no better way of expressing my gratitude than by *Living and Farming God's Way*. In gratitude for the restored relationship between me and God, I live and farm in a manner *different* to that of the world.

Living and Farming God's Way makes no sense and indeed, is impossible, without a relationship with God (Romans 8:8). Therefore you must first accept the reconciliation God has brought about between you and Him through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20-21). You must accept Christ as

Saviour. Once you have been saved, by grace, by faith in Christ (Romans 3:20-26 and Ephesians 2:8-10), He enables you to live your life in a new way. *Living and Farming God's Way* is therefore possible for everyone who has been saved by Christ and who is being led by His Spirit.

If you have not yet been saved by Christ and therefore have nothing to be grateful for, turn to the message of the **Wordless Book**. It is a small book without words consisting of six coloured pages. The six colours explain the message of the Bible in simple, easy to understand, terms. A short manual explaining the meaning of the colours is distributed with the *Wordless Book*. Wordless Books and accompanying manuals are available from *AMOS AGRIMIN* in various languages. When reading the manual, keep asking yourself: *Is this what I know? Is this what I believe? Is this what I confess? Do I witness to others? Do I expect Jesus to return? Am I ready to meet Him at His return?*

***Living and Farming God's Way* is not a lot of laws and rules you must obey in order to be saved or to gain God's love and favour ... *Living and Farming God's Way* is the new lifestyle of grateful people who have been saved by Jesus Christ.**

Question: Have you been saved? Are you grateful? Does your life and the way you farm reflect your gratitude?

Instruction: Memorise Hebrews 12:28

Reject: *You can save yourself by living according to the principles of Living and Farming God's Way. This is a lie. Only Christ can save you.*

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray for the salvation of the rural and agricultural community.
† Pray that the lives of those who have been saved will reflect their gratitude to the Lord.

2

Living and Farming God's Way... It is our calling and command

Read: Genesis 1:26-28 & 2:15, and Psalm 8:4-10

According to the above texts, the Lord gave people an important command right after creation. He put the earth and everything in it into our care. He told us to rule the earth in His Name and to take care of it. But God never only commands. He always makes it possible for us to obey His commands. In order to make it possible for us to rule the earth in His Name, He made us very much like Him! He created us in His image. He created us to be His representatives and equipped us with His blessing.

God does not call ministers, pastors and missionaries only. He calls all people to rule the earth, develop its potential and take care of it as His representatives. When we farm, we are obeying this specific command of God. He wants to provide everyone with daily bread (Matthew 6:11) but He does not produce the food Himself. He calls and uses us as agriculturalists to work the land and produce food in His Name. Therefore, because we are farming on behalf of God, we must do everything His way. People should be able to recognise God in the way we live and farm. They should be able to see His image in us.

We are commanded to rule over creation, develop its potential and take care of it all as God's representatives and image bearers. Therefore we strive towards *Living and Farming God's Way*.

Remember: You are representing God in agriculture. When you are farming you are doing His word. Therefore live and farm according to His instructions.

Instruction: Memorise Genesis 1:26-28

Reject: *God only calls ministers, pastors and missionaries. Only they are in His full-time service. Reject this lie. This is not what the Lord says in His Word.*

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that all agriculturalists will understand that God has called them to farm and that they should therefore strive towards *Living and Farming God's Way*. † Pray that agriculturalists will always reflect the image of God everywhere.

3

Living and Farming God's Way... The proof of our love for God

Read: Luke 10:27 and 1 John 5:3

We love God in gratitude for having saved us. But loving God is not an emotion. In 1 John 5:3 we read, *This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome.* Love, therefore, is a verb, something that must be done and lived.

According to Luke 10:27, we must ***always*** express our love for God ***everywhere, in every way and in everything.*** We may not limit our love for Him to church. We must love Him in agriculture, politics, sport, culture, education and the economy. It is not enough to give Him only a part of your strength. You must love Him with ***all your*** strength – the strength you use to play with your children and the strength you use to farm and to work. It is not enough to love the Lord with only a part of your mind when you attend church. You must love Him with ***all your*** mind – the part of your mind you use to educate your children, plan your work, solve problems, draw up a budget and diagnose sick animals. The way you and I live and farm therefore must reflect our love for God.

We are commanded to love God with all our heart and all our soul and all our strength and all our mind. Therefore we strive towards *Living and Farming God's Way.*

- Remember:** Your job in farming is an opportunity to demonstrate your love for the Lord. Use it!
- Instruction:** Memorise Luke 10:27 and 1 John 5:3
- Reject:** *You can love God even if your life does not reflect this love.* Reject this idea. Your whole life *must* reflect your love for God.
- Prayer:** † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that agriculturalists and agricultural leaders will become obedient to God in everything. † Pray that Christian agriculturalists will strive towards *Living and Farming God's Way* because they really love God.

4

Living and Farming God's Way... Thus we honour the Lord in all we do

Read: 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Amos 5:21-24

God is not just interested in Sundays but in every day of the week. He is not just interested in what we do in church. He is especially interested in what you and I do at home and on the farm. The Lord is not just interested in people's souls, but in their whole being (soul, spirit and body - 1 Thessalonians 5:23). Life in all its fullness and facets is important to God. The earth and everything in it was created by God through Christ. It belongs to Him (1 Corinthians 10:26; Colossians 1:15-20). Christ's Kingship cannot be limited to the church. He is King of all the earth, of everything and everyone (Revelations 1:5). The way you and I live and farm must show that Christ is our King and subsequently reflect our honour and respect for Him.

Living and farming to God's glory means putting what you learn in church into practice during the week. You honour God by taking good care of your animals and trees (Proverbs 12:10 and 27:18 & 23); by weeding your fields; by showing compassion for the poor; by speaking the truth and addressing people in a loving manner. You honour God by working hard (Ephesians 4:28 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15); by exercising self-control

and not losing your temper; by being on time and doing the right thing at the right time; by taking care of your family and relatives (1 Timothy 5:8). You honour God by keeping yourself, your home and your surroundings clean and tidy. You honour God by looking after and maintaining the vehicles and implements you work with. You honour God by not drinking alcohol for the sake of your children and the community, knowing that its abuse causes pain, suffering and poverty in many homes (Romans 14:19-20; Proverbs 23:20-21 and 23:29-35).

Our religion means nothing if we do not live and farm to God's glory. Then God hates and detests all the feasts and special days such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Communion we celebrate in church. Then it is all a waste of time and money. Even our music and singing becomes a noisy uproar that God detests. It is not only what we do in church but also what we do outside the church and in agriculture that proves our honour and respect for God.

We are commanded to do all we do to the honour and glory of the Lord – 24 hours of every day, 7 days of every week. Therefore we strive towards *Living and Farming God's Way*.

Remember: By *Living and Farming God's Way* we are proclaiming that Jesus' Kingship cannot be limited to the church. Jesus is also King of agriculture!

Instruction: Memorise 1 Corinthians 10:31

Reject: *You can live as you like as long as you honour God on Sundays or in church.* Reject this misconception!

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that agriculturalists will honour and glorify God in all they do.

5

Living and Farming God's Way... Thus we build God's Kingdom

Read: Matthew 6:9-13 & 33

Many people make the mistake of believing that they need recognise God as King only in church. They believe the church is the only sphere in which He has a say. This is a lie. God's Kingship reaches across all of creation, all life and all people. He is King of the rulers of the earth and He has absolute authority, power and dominion (Ephesians 1:21 and Revelations 1:5). Even those who refuse to accept it here and now will one day be forced to bow down before the King (Philippians 2:9-11).

God's kingdom comes where people accept his Kingship and obey the will of the King. If more and more agriculturalists accept God's Kingship and obey Him, then His Kingdom will come in agriculture. If you obey God in your relationships with others, His Kingdom will come in your relationships. If He has the final say over your money, then His Kingdom comes in your money matters.

You and I must therefore do all we can to make a small bit of heaven visible here on earth. Our lives and our farming businesses must increasingly reflect the image of heaven. Those looking at our lives and our farms should seem to be seeing a piece of heaven in which everything is done according to the will of the King. By *Living and Farming God's Way* we admit and confess the Kingship of the Holy Trinity of God over agriculture.

Jesus commanded us to strive towards the Kingdom of God and to pray that His Kingdom will come on earth. Therefore we strive towards *Living and Farming God's Way*.

Remember: Strive towards *Living and Farming God's Way* because living and farming any other way desecrates the Name of the Lord and promotes the cause of the kingdom of darkness.

Instruction: Memorise Matthew 6:9 & 33

Reject: *Christ is only King of the church and therefore only has a say in the church.* This is a lie. Never believe it!

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that God's Kingship will be recognised and accepted by all

agriculturalists and that as a consequence they will live and farm in obedience to Him.

6

Living and Farming God's Way... means rejecting idol worship in all its guises

Read: Deuteronomy 5:6-10 and Ephesians 2:1-3

Living and Farming God's Way is about a lifestyle according to the directions of the only true God - God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit - God who saves us and makes us His children. *Living and Farming God's Way* is a rejection of all the idols trying to tell us how to live and to farm. Idols are all those things that are more important to us than God – everything we attach more worth to than God and His Word. Everything that has a greater influence on our lives and our farming businesses than God, is an idol. The following are a few examples:

Where the idol of **greed** (Ephesians 5:5) is present, people will be dishonest, exploit others, will do crooked business, overgraze their land or never rest their fields – all to get hold of more money and more possessions.

Arrogance is another idol many bow down to (1 Samuel 15:23). Someone with an arrogant attitude says, *I will do as I please. No-one will teach or tell me what to do – not even God. I am the boss of my farm!* *Living and Farming God's Way* is only possible if you are willing to let go of your own will and do what God instructs you to do.

Water spirits and the spirits of the ancestors may not be called upon and consulted. The Lord God forbids you to consult spirits or the dead (Deuteronomy 18:9-14 and Isaiah 8:19-22). It is not possible for the dead to speak to the living. These are demons who take on the shape of the dead. Ask God and consult His Word for guidance and advice regarding your farm. You may also consult agriculturalists. However, you may not follow their advice if it is in conflict with God's Word.

You may also put God second out of fear (1 Samuel 15:24 and Revelation 21:8). This happens easily. When it does happen it means **that which you fear** is controlling your life and replacing God in your life. Many people's lives are controlled by their fear of a spell being cast on them, that people will send disasters down on them or that they will be rejected.

If the **traditions, habits and customs of your forbears** are in conflict with God's will and His Word, you must not cling to them. Doing so means that these traditions and customs are more important to you than God (cf. Mark 7:8-9) and they have become idols. Stop following these traditions. Only the Lord is God. Nothing and no-one may be equally or more important to you than He.

Living and Farming God's Way is the only way to live and to farm because God forbids us to have or obey any other gods.

Remember: Strive towards *Living and Farming God's Way*. Living and farming in any other way is idol worship because something or someone else has become more important to you than God and His Word.

Instruction: Memorise Deuteronomy 5:7-9

Reject: *Only images people make and bow down to are idols. This is the only idol worship God forbids.* This is a lie! Most idols are not images but all kinds of things that are more important to people than God.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that agriculturalists will all bow down to the Holy Trinity and worship and obey Him alone. † Pray against all kinds of idolatry. Confess the idols in your own life and also those in the lives of your family, ancestors and people.

7

Living and Farming God's Way ...

This is the content of our discipleship programme

Read: Matthew 28:18-20

When we guide people into becoming Jesus' disciples, there are two important things we must teach them:

- Firstly we must proclaim **Jesus as Saviour** to them so that they will get to know Him personally. They must believe that He has paid the full and final price for their sins. They must accept that He has reconciled them to God the Father by His death and resurrection. They must be certain they are God's children and have eternal life (John 1:12 and 1 John 5:12-13).
- Secondly they must be taught that **Jesus is King** and that His will must be obeyed. Jesus' clearly says, ... *teaching them everything I have commanded you*. In other words we must *teach people to do everything Jesus said!*

These two important aspects of discipleship are beautifully summarised in *AMOS AGRIMIN's mission*. (It says what we are doing to encourage *Living and Farming God's Way*.) *AMOS AGRIMIN* strives towards **granting everyone in Africa who is part of the rural and farming community, an opportunity to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to equip them with knowledge and skills that will enable them to really live and farm according to Biblical values and norms.**

If you are only teaching people how to get to heaven one day you have not made them disciples of Jesus. You have only carried out Jesus' command when you have taught people how to be the church everyday of the week and not only to go to church on Sundays. You and I have only obeyed Jesus' command when we have taught agriculturalists to live and farm according to the Word and the will of the King. Making disciples therefore, is training your fellow agriculturalists (employers and employees) to live and farm God's way. You must help them to transform

their knowledge into life skills, or else you have not taught them anything at all.

Jesus commanded us to go to all the nations and to make them His disciples. He said we must teach them to *do* what He commanded us to do. Therefore, if you want to obey Jesus' command, you must train agriculturalists with a view to *Living and Farming God's Way*.

Remember: You have not made people disciples if all you have taught them is how to get to heaven. Teach them *Living and Farming God's Way*.

Instruction: Memorise Matthew 28:18-20 and *AMOS AGRIMIN'S* mission.

Reject: *God is only interested in saving souls. The rest is minor detail.* This is not the message of the Bible. Reject it. People (soul, spirit and body), all of the earth, and all life is important to God.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that the Lord will help you accept fellow responsibility for *AMOS AGRIMIN'S* mission and to help us make disciples in agriculture. † Pray that Christian agriculturalists will understand that discipleship cannot be limited to saving souls. † Pray that agricultural leaders will also be made disciples of Jesus.

8

Living and Farming God's Way... Conclusion

Read: Acts 26:20

Christians are called to prove that they have been saved and belong to God by their deeds. Therefore I ask you:

Are you **grateful** that Jesus Christ has saved you? Hebrews 12:28

- Yes or no
- Then show it by *Living and Farming God's Way!*

Do you believe that God created you in **His image** to rule over and take care of earth as **His representative**? Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:15

- Yes or no
- Then show it by *Living and Farming God's Way!*

Do you **love** the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength and all your mind? Luke 10:27

- Yes or no
- Then show it by *Living and Farming God's Way!*

Do you want to do everything to **the glory of God** for 24 hours a day – whether you are eating, drinking or farming? 1 Corinthians 10:31

- Yes or no
- Then show it by *Living and Farming God's Way!*

Do you desire and pray that the **Kingdom of God** will come on earth, and especially in agriculture? Matthew 6:9 & 33

- Yes or no
- Then show it by *Living and Farming God's Way!*

Do you confess that the LORD your God who saved you from sin and death is the **only true God**? **Do you reject all idols** and refuse to honour, serve or obey them? Deuteronomy 5:6-10

- Yes or no
- Then show it by *Living and Farming God's Way!*

Do you want to obey Jesus command to go to all the nations and to make them His **disciples**? Do you want to teach them to do everything Jesus commanded us to do? Matthew 28:18-20

- Yes or no
- Then show it by *Living and Farming God's Way!*

Instruction: Do revision and see how many of the verses you learnt you can still remember.

Prayer: † Respond to God’s Word in prayer. † Pray that the deeds of Christian agriculturalists will prove the authenticity of their conversion. Pray that *Living and Farming God’s Way* will become their lifestyle.

Commitment: Lord, based on the above seven reasons I commit myself to *Living and Farming God’s Way*.

.....

.....

Name

Date

INSTRUCTION

1. In your own words explain to a friend why you committed yourself to *Living and Farming God’s Way*. Write it down here:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

PART 2 – GOD’S WAY

9

By what is God’s Way characterized?

It is so radically different it seems nonsensical (1)

Read: Genesis 17:1-6 & 17-19, and 18:11-12; Romans 4:18-21

How do I go about developing my herd? I do what is logical – I buy good, performance tested rams and cover my best, most fertile ewes. But how does the Lord go about developing a nation to become more than the sands of the sea? He does something **radically different**. He chooses a barren woman and a very old man whose body is well past its prime. Sarah had been barren all her life. What chance was there for her to have a baby at the age of ninety and that by a man who was already a hundred years old (Genesis 17:17)? Even fertile women don’t have babies at the age of ninety. Tell someone a similar tale today and they will shout out, *Nonsense! It’s impossible! Ridiculous!* That was Abraham and Sarah’s first response too (Genesis 17:17 and 18:12).

But this story is not the exception. Throughout history God often did mighty deeds through the sons born to barren women. **Isaac** was born of Sarah (Genesis 21); Rachel gave birth to **Joseph** (Genesis 30:1 & 22-24); **Samson** was born of Manoah’s barren wife (Judges 13:2 et seq.); Ruth gave birth to **Obed** (she was childless when she married Boaz – Ruth 4:13 et seq.); Hannah gave birth to **Samuel** (1 Samuel 1:2) and **John the Baptist’s** mother was the barren and aged Elizabeth (Luke 1:18 & 36). You see, God goes about things differently! He gave children to old women who had been married and intimate for years without having children. But He also gave the virgin, Mary, a **Child** before she was married or had intercourse (Luke 1:34-38). In medical terms, these are seven nonsensical stories. *God’s Way* is so radically different that it sounds like nonsense. But that is how God works! Nothing is impossible to Him (Luke 1:37, also read 34-38).

The above makes it very clear that *Living and Farming God's Way* is radically different and therefore expects you and me to believe that nothing is impossible for God.

Question: Do you believe the miracles we read about in the Bible? Do you believe that God can perform similar miracles today?

Instruction: Believe in nonsense because nothing is impossible for God!

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Ask the Lord to help you believe that He is still able to perform all the miracles we read about in the Bible today – and that He wants to do them!

10

What characterizes God's Way?

It is so radically different it seems nonsensical (2)

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:18-32

God's Way is so radically different that it seems like nonsense. Many stories in the Bible make no logical sense. Consider Gideon. He was the most unlikely candidate to deliver Israel from the Midianites. He was afraid and hid away. He came from the poorest family in all Manassa and he was the most insignificant of all his father's children (Judges 6:14-15 – please read the whole of chapter 6 and up to chapter 7:7). In spite of all this, the Lord decided to use him. But that is not all: Gideon did not stand much of a chance against the multitude of Midianites. Yet the Lord expected him to reduce his army from 32 000 to 10 000 and then to 300 men. It is illogical. It doesn't make sense. But that is *God's Way!*

The Bible is filled with other signs and wonders (e.g. 1 Kings 1 to 7). Not one of them can be explained by logic. We must merely believe that God often uses signs and wonders to do things. The same may be said of the commands in Luke 6:27 et seq. It makes no sense to love your enemies and to do good unto those who harm you.

God's Way is so radically different that it seems like nonsense. This is also true of the heart of the Gospel. The Jesus story just doesn't make sense to those who are enslaved to logic and so-called scientifically proven, concrete facts. It is all nonsense. The virgin birth: *Nonsense!* Common sense says it's impossible. The resurrection and ascension: *Nonsense!* And between the virgin birth and the ascension is the *nonsensical* story of the cross, salvation from evil and reconciliation with God (1 Corinthians 1:18-32)! Thank the Lord that the cross is only nonsense to the world, to those who are lost. To us it is the revelation of the power of God's salvation (cf Romans 1:16).

If what God did in the past does not always make sense, then what He does today definitely won't make sense to everyone. If God's commands seemed impossible in the past, they will still seem impossible today. If God expected His people (Exodus 33:12-16) and later His church (Ephesians 4:17-24) to live radically different lives, He still expects it from all His children today. He expects it from you as an agriculturalist. God has not changed. Nor has the way in which He works!

Question: Are you prepared to believe the whole Bible and accept it as the Word of God? Or do you only accept that which makes sense to you?

Instruction: Do not be surprised if people do not want to believe the Gospel. Remember that it doesn't make sense to them. Pray that the Lord will lift the veil from their minds (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that the Lord will reveal Himself to the rural and agricultural community in a special super-natural way and that they will be receptive to the Gospel.

11

What characterizes God's Way?

It is so radically different, it seems nonsensical (3)

Read: 2 Kings 4:42-44 and Hebrews 11:6

The Holy Spirit gradually convinced us as a family that we should give our personnel a share in our farming business. It made no sense, because our business was not even an economic unity according to today's standards. And so I literally complained to the Lord and told Him it was impossible. On 15 January 2006 I fasted and prayed about the issue. The Lord answered clearly: 2 Kings 4:42-44! God's instruction really tested the limits of our faith. First I was too afraid to believe, and then I became more afraid not to believe. As with Gideon, He stripped us of everything we could rely on – He reduced our 10 000 men to 300 so that only He would receive recognition and glory (Judges 7:2-7). We had to learn to obey, against all common sense. It was not, and still is not, easy. But as He did before January 2006, the Lord has continued to do many miracles to help us carry out His command. Praise and glory be to Him! He always makes it possible for His children to carry out His commands.

Therefore:

- Obey God's commands, even if they don't make sense to you. Just make sure that you heard Him right.
- Do not be surprised if many of God's instructions land you in a crisis in your faith, because they don't always seem possible to carry out. You are often required to believe in spite of reality and the dictates of logic. But that is how God worked in Biblical times and it is still how He works today. (Read about the crisis God's instruction landed Ananias in - Acts 9:10-13).
- Expect God to use you to do things you don't feel up to. The Bible tells of many people who first complained when the Lord gave them an instruction. Think of great heroes like Moses (Exodus 3:11 to 17), Gideon (Judges 6:11-40) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4-10).
- Ask God to do miracles to help and enable you to carry out His instructions. Expect and believe that He will do it.
- Expect *Living and Farming God's Way* to challenge your faith, because *God's Way* is so radically different that it sounds like nonsense. *Living and Farming God's Way* will challenge you to believe the impossible.

- Be prepared to be different and to do things differently to the world – differently to everyone who does not believe in the LORD our God.

Question: Has the Lord ever given you an instruction you haven't felt up to? If so, what was it? Don't you want to obey now? He always makes it possible for His children to carry out His instructions.

Remember: *Living and Farming God's Way* is only possible for those who believe.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that Christians will learn anew to hear the Lord's voice. † Pray that they will obey His instructions even if they do not make sense to them or if they do not feel up to it.

12

What characterises God's Way? God works through people (1)

Read: Genesis 1:26-28

I often hear people saying, *God is in control. What will be, will be.* It sounds so right and so pious! But is it proof of faith, or is it maybe a way of avoiding your responsibilities?

This brings us to many important questions: ***Does God need you and me to pray, or does He merely want us to pray? Does God need us to do things, or does He merely want to use us to do things?*** Many argue that an almighty God needs nothing – neither us nor our prayers. In a certain sense this is true, because God is God. We depend on Him, not He on us. But what is meant by God as almighty? To me it means that God ***can*** do everything He ***wants*** to. What God does ***not want*** to do, He ***cannot*** do. He does not want to sin, therefore He cannot sin. The real question therefore is not whether God ***can*** do things without us and our prayers, but whether He ***wants to*** do things without us and our prayers. If God can still do everything He wants to without us, why do

we pray? Are we not wasting our time? Definitely not! God, by His own free will, decided to make His case, His will and His desire in the world dependent on people. John Wesley, that famous man of God, said, *God does nothing on earth except in answer to believer's prayers.*

God put creation completely into the hands of Adam (who represents all people). He made Adam responsible for creation. This is clear from the position in which God put Adam. It is also clear from the assignment and responsibility He gave him. Adam's assignment was to manage and take care of creation on behalf of God as His representative. God put people between Him and the rest of creation. God put the responsibility for what was to become of creation firmly in the hands of people. Earth was people's responsibility. To enable people to carry out His command, God made people much like Himself. He created them in His likeness and image.

By His own free will God decided to make his case and the realisation of His will in this world dependent on people. This is confirmed by the following:

1. **So completely did God entrust the earth to Adam that Adam in turn could do as he pleased with it.** When the devil tempted the Lord Jesus, he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in an instant and, according to Luke 4:5-7, said, *And I will give you all their authority and splendour, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.* Jesus does not deny the devil's claim. He knew that Adam had indeed given that which God had entrusted to him, to the devil.
2. God entrusted the earth to Adam. Whatever was to become of the earth and its inhabitants, whether it be good or bad, God put in the hands of Adam and his descendents. (This does not mean that God turned His back on creation and has become uninvolved. He never lets go of His creation.) **This decision by God not to take responsibility for the earth back out of people's hands was so complete and final that He had to become human Himself in order to fix what Adam had made a mess of.** In Christ, God had to become a man, the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). Only as a Man could God change the lot and destination of that which He had entrusted to people.

3. This also explains why God did not use angels to **proclaim the Gospel**. He again entrusted this responsibility to people (Matthew 28:18-29). And no matter how much God wants to save people, He does not send workers to gather the harvest unless His children ask Him to do so in prayer (Matthew 9:35-38).

4. **The Bible teaches that people who have been saved will reign over the earth for ever with the Man (Jesus) who saved them** (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelations 22:5). In Christ our authority is not abolished, but confirmed for ever! In Christ we are not exempted from our duties. No, in and through Christ God liberated us from evil. In Him He empowered us to once again obey our original calling, viz. to reign over the earth as God's representatives and to take care of it.

Because God decided, by His own free will, to do what He wanted to do on earth through people, He needs the believing prayers of His children and He works through His children. They are His body here on earth. Therefore, not praying and still arguing that *what will be will be*, because God is almighty, is nothing more than hypocrisy and blatant disobedience.

Living and Farming God's Way is God's will and desire, but it won't happen by itself. You and I are responsible to keep praying for it and to do what God instructs and commands us to do. For *Living and Farming God's Way* to become a reality in Africa, depends on you and me. It depends on *our* prayers and *our* obedience.

Question: Do you believe that God, of His own free will, decided to do nothing on earth without people? If you really believe that is true, how is it going to change your life?

Instruction: Put yourself at God's disposal. He works through people. Start by making more time to pray. Establish prayer groups in the area in which you live and work.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Beg the Lord to help you to pray more. † Pray that Christians in rural and agricultural communities will realise that *Living and*

Farming God's Way is dependent on them. God wants to do it through them.

[In chapter two of his book, *Intercessory Prayer*, Dutch Sheets discusses the important question, *Does God need me to pray or does He just want me to pray?*]

13

By what is God's Way characterized? God works through people (2)

Read: 1 Kings 18:1 & 18:41-46, and James 5:17-18

The first verse of 1 Kings 18 makes it quite clear that God wanted it to rain again in the land. It was *His* time and *His* will. *He* took the initiative and told Elijah what *He* wanted to do. Why was it then necessary for Elijah to pray to God seven times before He sent the rain? Because God works through people! What God wants and what He desires only comes to pass when ordinary people like you and me pray in faith. Think about the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1-2). Jesus promised the Spirit and it was God's will and desire to bless His disciples with the Spirit. Despite that they had to pray for ten days before it happened. In Isaiah 62:6-7 the Lord commands us to remind Him of His promises day and night. God's promises are fulfilled in answer to our prayers.

What the Lord wants to do in your life and on your farm will not come to pass if you do not pray to Him in faith and ask Him for it. The Lord will certainly not do that which He wants to do in agriculture if we do not pray. God put the responsibility to pray the *Lord's Prayer* for agriculture each day, into our hands, on our shoulders. Therefore you and I are responsible for what happens in agriculture!

God's will becomes a reality when you and I pray in faith and do what God says. But if no-one prays, that which is not His will comes to pass. In Ezekiel 22:29-31 we read about the hateful behaviour of the citizens of the country. God really wanted to forgive the sin of that country. Therefore He ... *looked for a man who would stand before Me in the gap* ... for the city. But He found none and so He could not save the city. It

seems too terrible to be true. *The absence of a person's prayer hinders God, prevents Him from doing that which He really wants to do.* It leaves Him with no choice but to punish the city. That is what the city deserves, not what God wanted to give them.

The realisation of *Living and Farming God's Way* depends on you and me. God works through people who obey Him. He works in answer to the believing prayers of His children. Therefore your greatest challenge is to discover God's will. Sit at His feet and listen. Discover His specific will for you, but also for agriculture in South Africa and Africa. And then, when you know His will, make time and persevere in faithful, believing prayer *until* His will is materialises.

Question: What is your prayer life like? How faithful are you in your quiet time?

Remember: The Bible tells us what God's will is and that we see His will in heaven. What you want to see happening in agriculture is not necessarily God's will. Here on earth you and I must make His will come to pass by constantly asking for it in prayer and obediently doing what He instructs.

Appeal: Come, fellow believers! Let us put ourselves at God's disposal. There are prayers that need to be prayed! There is work that must be done!

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that the rural and agricultural community will increasingly become a praying community – people who keep praying that *Living and Farming God's Way* materialise.

14

Features of God's Way? Unity and co-operation (1)

Read: Ephesians 1:1-14

There is absolute unity and co-operation between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They created everything *together* (Genesis 1:2 and John 1:1-2). Together they also decided to create people (Genesis 1:26). Read through the Gospel of John and you will be struck by the unity between the Father and the Son (John 1:18; 5:23 & 30; 10:30 & 38; 14:9-11 & 26-31; 15:10; 16:15-24 and 17:21-23). Many Scriptures talk about the unity and co-operation between the Father and the Son (John 14:26 and Romans 8:15). The Son and the Spirit also co-operate closely (John 14:26 and Romans 8:9). The Father equips the Son with the Holy Spirit to carry out His instructions (Matthew 3:16-17). Our salvation is the result of the co-operation between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:1-14).

Unity and co-operation is a distinguishing feature of God's being. That is what God is like and how He does everything. God's Way is unity and co-operation!

Because we are His image and represent Him, unity and co-operation should be a feature of our lives. Enmity, hate, envy, anger, arguments, division, discord and strife does not suit people who are committed to *Living and Farming God's Way*. These are the habits of our old, sinful nature which we must root out of our lives (Galatians 5:19-21).

Question: Are there unity and co-operation in your community and/or on your farm? What are your marriages and families like? Are there unity and co-operation between churches and between employers and employees? Are there unity and co-operation between leaders and the community?

Remember: *God's Way* is unity and co-operation!

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray for unity and co-operation in the rural and agricultural community - between all who confess themselves to be Christians first of all.

15

What characterises God's Way? Unity and co-operation (2)

Read: Ephesians 2:13-16 and John 17:21-23

We already know that there is absolute unity and co-operation between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Unity and co-operation is *God's Way*. But it doesn't end here. Because Jesus brings about reconciliation, unity spreads out in an ever-increasing circle:

- God made us one with Him (2 Corinthians 5:21 and Ephesians 2:13).
Then He commanded us to be one with Him and to remain in Him (John 15:4-10 and Colossians 2:6-7).
- God made His children one by joining them together in one body, the Church of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16).
Then He commanded His children to be one, even though they spoke different languages and belonged to different tribes and nations (Ephesians 2:13-16).

God always makes it possible for us to carry out His commands. Therefore He first makes us one and then commands us to be one. He tells us to become more and more as we already are, viz. one! In other words, we can be one because He has already made us one (Ephesians 4:3)!

Restored relationships, reconciliation, unity and co-operation are all important traits of *Living and Farming God's Way*. You and I cannot choose whether we want to do it or not. It is a command from God and we *must* strive towards unity. But where do we start?

The cross of Christ has two beams, a vertical beam (upright) and a horizontal beam (crossbeam). The upright beam reminds us that Jesus reconciles people with God. The crossbeam says that Jesus reconciles people with one another. The crossbeam is borne by the upright beam. True reconciliation between people is the fruit and the result of the reconciliation between God and people. Therefore we must first do all

we can to win people for Christ. You and I must appeal to people like Paul. He wrote, *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.* (2 Corinthians 5:20-21).

Strive towards the restoration of the relationship between the rural and agricultural community and God. Do everything you possibly can to win them for Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23). Then teach those who have been won for Christ to strive towards mutual unity and co-operation (John 17:21-23). In the following section we will learn how to do it.

Question: What are you doing to win agriculturalists (employers and employees and all their families) for Christ?

Remember: To win people for Christ is part of *Living and Farming God's Way*. How can people live and farm *God's Way* if they do not know and love Him?

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray for the salvation of agriculturalists and agricultural leaders. † Pray that all Christians in the rural and agricultural community will witness about Christ spontaneously and will win people for Him.

16

What characterises God's Way? Unity and co-operation (3)

Read: John 16:13-15

The Holy Trinity of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the perfect example of unity and co-operation. What we see in Him teaches us what promotes unity and co-operation between people. These are the things we should strive for in agriculture.

1. **Good communication:** There is an ongoing discussion between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Think of the hours and nights Jesus spent in prayer to the Father (Luke 5:16). They always concur about everything (John 16:13-15).
 - * *Therefore always strive towards positive communication. When people are informed and know what is happening, unity and co-operation comes easier.*

2. **Joint decisions:** The Holy Trinity of God together decided to create people (Genesis 1:26). When Jesus has to choose 12 disciples, He does not decide on His own. He prays all night and consults His Father (Luke 6:12-13). There are many other examples.
 - * *Therefore it is important to include people when decisions are being made. People who decide together are more motivated to work together and carry out decisions.*

3. **One goal:** The Father, Son and Spirit have a single purpose – the salvation of all of creation, in particular, people.
 - * *A shared vision in which everyone on the farm understands the part they must play and the contribution they must make is essential for unity and teamwork. It fills people with the feeling that they belong to a team and therefore each individual wants to give their best in the interest of the team.*

4. **Glorify one another:** The Father, Son and Holy Spirit glorified one another. Although it means much more, it also means that they gave one another recognition (John 17:4-5).
 - * *Giving one another recognition is very important. Everyone thrives under positive recognition and feedback. “Catching your people doing things right” is a good approach in labour management. Therefore say thank you and express your appreciation for each individual’s contribution, no matter how small. And honour and compliment one another.*

5. **Love is more than words:** Jesus expressed His love for the Father by obeying the Father.

- * *Just saying that you love people is not enough. Do what Jesus did – prove your love by seeing to other people’s needs and interests. Listen to their dreams, ideals and wishes and, where possible, help them realise them.*

Question: How do you fare concerning the five issues mentioned above? What else are you doing to encourage and establish good relationships.

Remember: Unity and co-operation definitely are the most important aspects of *Living and Farming God’s Way*. Establishing good relationships must always be important to you.

Prayer: † Respond to God’s Word in prayer. † Confess bad communication. † Confess your inclination to decide for others without consulting them. † Confess all your selfish dreams and ideals. † Confess your want of expressing gratitude and appreciation. † Confess love that stops at words and never translates into deeds.
† Ask the Father to help the rural and agricultural community with the above five practical issues.

17

What characterises God’s Way? Open hands (1)

Read: 2 Peter 1:2-4

Like father, like son. This idiom says exactly what it means – the child is a lot like its father or mother. This expression should be true of all Christians. We should be a lot like our Father, like God. We should take after our Father! After all, we have been called to reflect His image and to represent Him on earth. If we think and live *God’s Way*, people will see something of God in us. This means that you and I should live with open hands, because our God is a God who has open hands. **God shares everything He is and everything He has with people.** He gives to us generously.

According to Genesis 1 God shares His image, His breath, His ability to create and His authority over earth with people. Reading through the Old Testament we notice that God never closes His hands to us. From His hands we receive what is good and beautiful. He advises people and He shares His wisdom with the judges (2 Chronicles 19:7).

In the New Testament we read that God gave us His only Son (John 3:16) and sent His Spirit to live in us (Acts 2:4 and Romans 8:9). Thus He gave Himself to us.

Christ gave Himself to us when He died on the cross with open arms. A river of gifts and blessings – more than we could ever list - flows to us from those open hands. He gives us righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). He gives us the salvation He fashioned for us. He shares His victory with us. Now we are more than conquerors through Him who lives in us (Romans 8:37). He gives us a range of different gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4-11 & 27-28; Romans 12:4-8). He gives us the power to heal the sick and drive out evil spirits (Matthew 10:8; Luke 10:1-3:17 and Mark 16:16-18). He shares His peace, happiness, love and wisdom with us. He shares His peace, joy, love and wisdom with us (John 14:27 & 15:11; Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 1:30 and James 1). He shares His Name with us. We are called Christians (Acts 11:26) and in His Name we can ask anything of the Father (John 14:13-14). He tears the curtain and by His blood gives us free passage to the most Holy Place – the throne of God (Hebrews 10:19). He shares His inheritance with us and we become joint heirs with Him (Romans 8:17). He shares His right to forgive sins (John 20:23) and shares His glory with us (Romans 8:29-30). He even shares His home with us. He has gone to make a place ready for us so that we too can be where He is (John 14:3). When He returns He will share His right to judge the world and the heavenly beings with us (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

Do we need more proof to convince us that God does indeed have open hands?

God makes it possible for us to carry out His instructions. All we need for *Living and Farming God's Way* He has already provided us with.

Because He has open hands, you and I can live and farm with open hands!

Instruction: Consider everything the Lord has given you through the years. Count your blessings – count them one by one! Praise and glorify the Lord!

Remember: If you are a Christian you are rich, even if you don't own a cent.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Worship God. He has open hands. † Thank the Lord for all He has already given you and for all He promises to still give you.

18

What characterises God's Way? Open hands (2)

Read: Romans 12:1-2 and Luke 1:38

You and I must live with open hands because the LORD our God has open hands. *God's Way* is open hands and *God's Way* is our calling! What does this mean?

Because God has given Himself to us in Christ, we must **first** give ourselves to Him as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2). This means we must make ourselves completely available to Him so that He can use us for His purposes. When the angel told Mary that God wanted to use her to give birth to the Saviour she said, *I am the LORD's servant*. In other words, she made herself available to the Lord. This should also be our response to all the Lord's commands and instructions, even if, like Mary, we feel it is impossible. Everything is possible for God.

The congregations in Macedonia are a good example. They were very poor and were oppressed by other congregations. Yet they insisted on contributing to help relieve the needs of others. They gave even more than they could afford. How did they manage it? They gave themselves

to God first! Then it was easy to give themselves to others and to be generous.

Question: Have you given yourself to God yet because He gave Himself to you?

Instruction: Make yourself unconditionally available to God. Tell Him that you are available for anything He would like to do in your community or in agriculture through you. Ask Him what He wants to do through you.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that Christians in the rural and agricultural community will give themselves to God and be available for His plan for agriculture: *Living and Farming God's Way*. † Pray for people who are religious but have not yet given themselves to God.

19

What characterises God's Way?

Open hands (3)

Read: 1 John 3:16-18

If you live only for yourself and farm only to enrich yourself you most certainly are not *Living and Farming God's Way*. *Living and Farming God's Way* is about open hands!

All Christians must give themselves to others and be willing to share their possessions with others. Everyone must reflect the image of our *open-hands-God*. Everyone must demonstrate that He is a generous God. Therefore we must obey the repeated instructions and commands in the Bible to be generous and to share, no matter how much we own (Luke 3:11). The command to be generous was not only given to Christians who are rich, but to all Christians (Hebrews 13:16). It should not be the abundance you have but the generous God you serve that motivates you to live and farm with open hands? How do you go about it?

In order to live with open hands you first need to work hard to have something to give (Ephesians 4:28). Secondly, don't try to make money out of everything. The prophet Amos condemns the attitude of always trying to make money out of everything, even wheat sweepings (please read Amos 8:4-6)! The Lord commands us to leave something for the poor (Leviticus 19:9-10 and Deuteronomy 24:19-22). This does not mean we should do it exactly that way today. It does however mean we should have an open heart and open hands for the poor. We must still do something!

Someone once asked a friend of mine if he wanted to buy some cows from him. My friend could not really turn down the offer at the price the man asked. But he did not need the cattle. After praying about the issue, he decided not to accept the offer himself but to help his workers to buy them. He had already helped them to buy some land and they needed the cattle and the money more than he did.

You needn't feel aggrieved and depressed because the Lord expects you to live and farm with open hands (Deuteronomy 15:1-18). He promises His help and care to everyone who gives freely and shows compassion. He gives in return and promises the giver a good future (Psalm 112; Proverbs 11:24-25; Proverbs 14:31 and 19:17; Isaiah 58:6-11; Luke 3:11 and 6:38; 1 Timothy 6:17-18; Hebrews 13:16). You could really learn to pray the following at mealtimes: *Father, think of all those who are less privileged and in need. Give to them through us and then please take care of us.* Then get up and start putting your prayer into practice.

Instruction: Memorise Acts 20:35.

Remember: *Living and Farming God's Way* demands that you live and farm with open hands. It is the exact opposite of selfishness and greed.

Prayer: Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that the Lord will free His children (including you) from selfishness and greed because it makes *Living and Farming God's Way* impossible. † Pray that you will never close your hands for fear of not having enough yourself. Our Father promises to take care of everyone who lives with open hands.

20

What characterises God's Way? To serve (1)

Read: Mark 10:45 and Philippians 2:5-8

True leaders do not strive to be heroes. Their passion is to make heroes of others. If they succeed, they become heroes too. This is a timeless truth. Where agriculture is concerned, the question may be asked: How successful are you really if you are a good farmer but do not succeed in empowering others to become good, or even better farmers than you?

Boet Pretorius, a farmer from Zimbabwe who lost three farms in 2001, once asked a subsistence farmer in Zambia what was his dream. The ambitious young man answered, *I want to become the best farmer in Zambia.* Later the Zambian asked Boet, *Sir, do you have any dreams left after everything that has happened to you?* Boet answered, *Yes, my dream is to make you the best farmer in Zambia.*

This is exactly what the Word teaches us about Christ! He didn't think of Himself or cling to His glory. He looked away from Himself. He focussed on us! He did not come to be served, but to serve and to give Himself (Mark 10:45).

Jesus came to serve us to permanently change our lot and our destination! We were destined for God's punishment, eternal death (Ephesians 2:3). We were without God, without hope and without a future. Now we have been saved. We are on our way to Him. We are going to share in His eternal glory. In order to change our lot and our destination, Jesus was willing to:

- ❖ give up his equal status with God;
- ❖ give up all His rights and privileges;
- ❖ become human – not the richest, most important person, but a simple slave without rights or prestige;
- ❖ obey God unto death for our sake; to bear the terrible, degrading death on the cross (Galatians 3:13).

Jesus demonstrated *God's Way* to us by coming to serve us. From His example it is clear that there is no room for selfishness, bossiness or pride in *God's Way*. *Living and Farming God's Way* demands that you look away from yourself and serve others. Always ask yourself questions such as: How can I help and serve young emerging farmers? How can I create more work? How can I put my workers' (or my employer's) interests before my own? How can I help my son become a better farmer than I am? What is the best for agriculture in general? What contribution can I make to help solve the big agricultural problems in South Africa and Africa, even if it is going to cost me?

Question: Are you willing to demonstrate *God's Way* to others as Jesus demonstrates it to us? He came to serve us and to gave Himself for us!

Instruction: Consider the questions at the end of this section. Start talking to the Lord about them. Keep on talking until you know His will.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that *God's Way* will be demonstrated in rural and agricultural communities.

21

What characterises God's Way? To serve (2)

Read: Mark 10:45

Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as ransom for many. The real challenge His demonstration of *God's Way* poses us with is the following:

1. God challenges us to ***relinquish*** (surrender) everything that prevents us from serving others. We are especially challenged to follow Jesus' example (John 13:12-17 and Philippians 2:3-8) and to relinquish our status and position (superior attitude of *I am the boss*), and possibly many rights and privileges we have enjoyed so far too. Remember what Jesus relinquished (Philippians 2:5-8).

2. To serve like Jesus served you must be prepared to **identify** completely with the people you must serve. Because God put you in Africa to serve Africa the question is: *Do you fully identify with Africa? Is Africa's pain and suffering your pain and suffering? Do you laugh and cry with Africa?* If you are still considering exchanging Africa for another home for your own sake, you must make very sure that it is what the Lord expects you to do. If He wants you to leave, you must obey Him and go because then He has a different calling for you. However, turning your back on Africa against His wishes may lead to your own downfall. [Read Jeremiah 41:17 to 43:3.]
3. To serve means being willing to pay a very **high** price. There are no boundaries and no turning back. Jesus challenges you to serve as He served unto death! At all costs! (John 13:1 and 1 John 3:16)! You cannot serve others without getting your hands and your knees dirty. If you lose courage along the way, remember that God will reward you for **services rendered** (Philippians 2:9-11 and Hebrews 12:1-3). Therefore you can keep serving even if you receive no gratitude or appreciation for what you are doing.
4. Remain focussed on the **purpose for our service**. Our purpose is not to temporarily relieve people's suffering and to make them dependent on us in the process. As a Servant, Jesus Christ permanently changed our fate and our destination. You and I have been called to permanently change the fate and destination of the rural and agricultural community as fellow workers with Christ. We have been called to permanently change the course and direction of agriculture in Africa – away from conflict over land; away from the complete collapse of agriculture; away from famine; away from the destruction of natural resources; away from the destruction of the rural community by HIV/Aids towards *Living and Farming God's Way*, so that God will receive the glory and honour!
5. In Africa the time has come to stand up against everything that is out of keeping with *God's Way's* principle of service – the abuse and ill-treatment of women and children; the abuse of power by those who govern and governments; self-enrichment of the

individual at the expense of the masses; the domination of one group by another; the destruction of nature and thereby valuable natural resources. **In Africa we will have to learn to serve each other in such a way that God will be able to change the fate and destination of Africa through us.**

Question: Are you ready for these five challenges? Are you willing to tackle them with fervour?

Instruction: Talk to the Lord about the challenge you are least up to. Ask Him to help you. Nothing is impossible for Him.

Prayer: Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that agriculturalists will accept these challenges and thereby demonstrate *God's Way* in the rural and agricultural community.

22

What characterises God's Way?

Conclusion

Read: Isaiah 40:25

BEWARE OF IMITATIONS! People are not always willing to pay a **high price** for the original genuine product. Imitations are **cheaper**. Therefore they buy pirate parts for their vehicles, make their own copies of CD discs and buy prints instead of genuine paintings. They even make plastic flowers and forge trade marks on clothes and shoes. At a religious level we call these imitations *hypocrisy* and *form religion*. It looks good at first glance, but it is false and a fake. Imitations even exist for marriage. Sexual licentiousness is a pathetic imitation of true love. The same applies to *same-sex marriages* (I do not consider them marriages at all) as an alternative to marriage between a man and a woman.

It is necessary to consider the meaning of ***Living and Farming God's Way*** once again because it is so easy for a striking vision to degenerate into a lovely *slogan*. Everyone accepts it because it sounds good but no-one *lives* it anymore because they don't know what it means. Before we know it we find ourselves involved in cheap imitations.

Therefore be very careful:

1. **God's Way is so radically different that it seems like nonsense.** The way the world lives and farms is not necessarily *God's Way*, no matter how good, technical, scientific, pious and religious it may seem. *God's Way* is more than having farm devotions or handing out Bibles. It challenges you to believe the impossible and to obey God, even if His instructions and commands don't make sense.
2. **God's Way always works through people.** Therefore *Living and Farming God's Way* demands that you be fully available for whatever God wants to do. It especially requires you to spend more time in prayer. Look at Jesus' prayer life (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16 and 6:12), and it is clear that five minutes a day is not enough!
3. **God's Way is unity and co-operation.** Unity is more than the absence of open conflict. Unity is more than tolerating one another for the sake of This kind of unity is one of the cheap imitations the world has to offer.
4. **God's Way is living and farming with open hands.** To give is more than getting rid of something you no longer need. *God's Way* requires you and me to give everything, even that which is precious to us. *God's Way* demands that you give yourself.
5. **Jesus demonstrated God's Way by becoming a servant.** To serve is more than to help people. *God's Way* requires self-abasement, giving up and sacrifice.

No matter how we look at *God's Way*, one thing is certain: **God's Way = a very high standard.** Whoever commits himself or herself to *God's Way* must be willing to pay the full price because *God's Way* is about the real thing – not cheap imitations.

Question: How can we get rid of all *God's Way* imitations? How can we reach God's high standard - the standard of *God's Way*?

Instruction: Confess the cheap imitations in your life.

Prayer: † Respond to God’s Word in prayer. † Pray that Christians will not be satisfied with the standard of the world’s imitations. Pray that Christians will strive towards the high standard demanded by *God’s Way* at all costs.

INSTRUCTION

1. In your own words explain your understanding of the five *God’s Way* principles to a friend. Write it down here:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

PART 3 – RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE

23

Biblical guidelines for good relationships (1): Do unto others as God does unto you!

Read: Matthew 5:43-48 and Galatians 5:25

God's Way is unity and co-operation. Therefore one of the most important features of *Living and Farming God's Way* is good relationships. If you make it difficult for people to love you because of your bad inter-personal relationships, you are also making it difficult for them to love your God. Good relationships win people for the Lord and are an effective way of spreading *Living and Farming God's Way*. Christians' bad relationships contradict *Living and Farming God's Way* and drive people away from Christ. Therefore we should treat others, especially unbelievers, well (1 Peter 2:12). They must still be won for Christ.

There are two ways of living. You can treat others the way they treat you – in other words treat those who treat you well, well, and vice versa. In other words you are merely responding to other people's behaviour. But then you are being just like the heathen (Matthew 5:46-47). Unbelievers also help those who help them and greet those who greet them. But they also insult those who insult them. If your relationship with others is determined by their attitude and behaviour towards you no one will be able to see that you live and farm differently to non-Christians.

Christians' behaviour must be determined by the Spirit. In other words, **your behaviour and mine should not be determined by people. Our behaviour should be determined by the Spirit within us.** Therefore Christ can expect you to love your enemies, to do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you and pray for those who treat you with contempt (Luke 6:27-36). What should your approach be as a

Christian? **Do unto others as God does unto you** no matter what they do unto you.



Do unto others



What they have done unto you

or



What God does unto you



You should do unto others (unbelievers included)

The Lord often repeats this command in His Word regarding many different issues:

- Love = 1 John 4:19
- Doing good = Luke 6:35
- Being merciful = Luke 6:36
- Encouragement/comfort = 2 Corinthians 1:3-5
- Service = John 13:14-15
- Acceptance = Romans 15:7
- Servanthood = Romans 15:1-3 / Philipians 2:3-8
- Forgiveness = Matthew 18:21-35 / Ephesians 4:32

When *Living and Farming God's Way* our attitude towards people should be determined by what God does to us. This will help create positive, Godly relationships in agriculture. Pray for the person who pays you too little. Help your neighbour even if he has never helped you. Bless people who are laying claim to your land. Lend to someone who is struggling, even if he doesn't always return your property. Be patient with those who are not yet competent enough to do their work well. Do unto them all as God has done unto you – even if it doesn't make sense to you. Remember, *God's Way* is so radically different that it sounds nonsensical.

Question: Do your relationships with people make it easy for them to love your God?

Instruction: Do unto others as God has done unto you.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that Christian agriculturalists' behaviour will be determined by the Spirit and not by those around them. † Ask the Father to help you to do unto others as He does unto you. † Pray for good relationships in rural and farming communities.

24

Biblical guidelines for good relationships (2): Put yourself in the other person's shoes!

Read: Hebrews 2:14-18 & 4:15.

There once was a town in which people were always criticizing, insulting and belittling one another. Discord, division and envy was the order of the day. Relationships deteriorated daily until an old man came up with a brilliant plan: Every year on a certain day the inhabitants had to wear one another's shoes and put themselves in the position of someone they did not like. It was not long before people's attitudes began to change. By deliberately putting themselves in someone else's position they became kinder, more understanding and accommodating. The wise old man obviously got his advice from Christ.

In Hebrews we read that Jesus fully identified Himself with us. He not only put on our shoes; He also put on our skin, our flesh and our blood. He became human in every way and was tempted just as we are tempted. Even though He never gave in to temptation, He took our sins upon Himself. Why did He identify Himself so completely with our needs and sufferings? In order to be a compassionate, merciful High Priest – One who had compassion with our weaknesses.

Christ understands how weak we are because He put Himself in our position. Therefore He is not hard and judgmental but soft,

understanding and sympathetic. (When He returns He will judge. That is when He will condemn those who do not believe.) Now He expects us to put ourselves in other people's position and to have compassion for them.

My brother was murdered on a farm near Uppington years ago. Four young men were soon arrested and I had the privilege of visiting them while they were in custody. By His grace the Lord enabled me to put myself in their shoes. I do not approve of what they did, but I had a change of heart when I put myself in their position: *Parents who were probably drunk every weekend from Friday to Monday and therefore a shortage of food; unemployed and friends with unemployed loafers; living in a single roomed corrugated iron house with eight to ten people where they die of heat in summer and of cold in winter; exposed to sex, rape and abuse from an age of as early as six; without God and without hope in the world.* The hate and bitterness in my heart made room for compassion and a desire to help them.

May the Lord help landowners and those without land to put themselves in each other's shoes; employers and employees; farmers and suppliers; agricultural leaders and agriculturalists; those with experience and those without; commercial farmers and emerging farmers; members of different churches and/or political parties; people who differ in colour, race, tribe and language. We really need it in agriculture.

Remember: *Seek first to understand, then to be understood.* Before ruthlessly criticising someone, ask yourself, *Why is that person behaving that way?* Consider the influence of the following in their life: upbringing, background, level of education, influence of friends, circumstances at home, example set by parents, religion, group and peer pressure, perceptions and expectations, fears, feelings of rejection, bad self-image, a want of basic and life skills, etcetera.

Instruction: Put yourself in the shoes of the person who irritated and frustrated you most this past week. Try hard to understand their behaviour.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that the Lord will grant you the ability to put yourself in

someone else's shoes. † Pray that opposing conflicting groups in agriculture and agricultural areas will put themselves in one another's shoes.

25

Biblical guidelines for good relationships (3): Love your neighbour as yourself

Read: Leviticus 19:18 & 33-34, and Matthew 7:12 & 22:38-40

Jesus came to show us what love really is. He gave His life for us. Therefore we should demonstrate our love for others by deeds. Nice words are not good enough (1 John 3:16-18).

Although John is writing about love for our fellow believers, the commandment to love has no limits (Leviticus 19:33-34 and Luke 10:25-37). You *must* love all people: All nationalities, races and tribes; people from all religions and levels of development; all social groupings; friends and enemies; educated and illiterate; close friends and strangers. First of all you must love your **brother and sister** in Christ. And if you say someone is not your brother or sister, you must still love them as your **neighbour**. And even if you do not consider someone your neighbour, you must love him or her as your **enemy** (Luke 6:27). There is no way out for us. We must love all people – as our brothers and sisters, or as our neighbours, or as our enemies. If you are struggling to love, pray and beg the Lord to grant you His love for people (Romans 5:5).

Your and my love for our neighbour must be demonstrated by our deeds. We all know the second great commandment: *Love your neighbour as yourself*. What if the Lord asks you to give just two examples that will prove that you are really trying to obey this commandment in terms of your employer or employee? What proof would you be able to provide?

Our love must be demonstrated and felt by our deeds: helping those in need; forgiveness for an offence; calculating salaries; the way you

address people; treating all people with dignity, especially the poor and the orphaned; respect for all people, including women, children and the elderly, etcetera.

Question: Do you really treat others the way you would like them to treat you (Matthew 7:12)?

Remember: God is love (1 John 4:8), therefore love is the most important feature of *Living and Farming God's Way*.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that the rural and agricultural community will follow Christ's example by demonstrating their love by their deeds. † Pray for good relationships. † Pray against faction fighting; ethnic cleansing (exterminating specific tribes); racism and civil war that are so part of Africa.

26

Biblical guidelines for good relationships (4): Behave like Jesus

Read: 1 Peter 2:21-24 and 1 John 2:6

There is a story of a Xhosa man and his wife who were on their way to a smart *do*. Along the way they came across a group of naughty children. As the children walked by one of them spat onto the man's clean, smart clothes and then ran away, leaving a terrible mark on the man's suit. Before the man could lose his temper and chase after the children, his wife touched his arm and softly said, *Remember, they spat at Jesus too*. Then the man prayed a short, appropriate prayer. He said, *Put me in Your fridge Lord, put me in Your fridge*.

So often the Holy Spirit must get us fired up to do something, but just as often He needs to cool us down so that we don't lose our temper. The Spirit of Christ can help you not to lose your temper when your application for a fire-arm is not speedily approved. He can help you not to shout and swear when your child angers you. Christ did not insult when He was insulted. He did not threaten when He was hurt (1 Peter

2:23). His Spirit can help us to behave like Jesus when we are insulted or treated badly; or when we are intimidated by political leaders; or when local authorities do not provide the services we are entitled to. The Spirit must help us to keep from insulting or threatening those who offend us in any way.

He who covers over an offence promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. Proverbs 17:9

Christians should not merely try to copy Christ or His life. They should ask Him to live His life in and through their lives (Galatians 2:19-20). Respond with Christ's self-control when people offend you and you will be contributing greatly towards improved relationships.

Instruction: Behave like Jesus. Never insult or threaten people, even if they insult and threaten you. Insults and threats destroy relationships.

Remember: The Spirit of Christ can help you to respond with self-control when people offend you.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that Christians will respond with the perfect self-control of Jesus Christ in conflict situations.

27

Biblical guidelines for good relationships (5): Be the first to confess your share of the blame in a problem

Read: Proverbs 18:19a; James 5:16 and 1 John 1:8-10

There are always two sides to a problem! These are very true words. But there is a different phrase: *The pot calls the kettle black.* It means the criticism aimed at someone could very well apply equally well to the speaker.

When Proverbs says, *An offended brother is more unyielding than a fortified city* it means that someone who has been offended or *even only feels offended*, stops listening and is no longer open to conviction. This heralds the end of unity and co-operation, and effective communication and good relationships.

A feeling of being offended against lands our relationships in a dead end. There is only one way to get out of the impasse. And that is to be the first to confess your share in the problem and to ask for forgiveness. An old man once said he believed that $10 + 10 = 100$. When asked how he reached that conclusion, he answered, *Through the years I have learned to confess my 10% share and guilt to my wife when we argue first. Then she usually also confesses her 10% and the problem is solved 100%. So you see, $10 + 10 = 100!$*

If only we could learn to apply this principle in our lives. Each and every population group in this country feels victimised about something: By apartheid or by affirmative action; or as a result of poverty or because they are victims of crime; or because they do not have land, or because they could possibly lose their land. In this broken world, most of us have been victimised by someone and all of us have wronged others.

How can we get out of this mess. Everyone tries to explain their viewpoint, but it is futile, because people who have been wronged, don't listen. They are unapproachable. If everyone feels wronged and no-one is willing to take the first step and confess their share of the problem, we will get nowhere. Are you willing to be the first to confess and admit your share of the blame for the problem? If not, why not? Is it self-justification? Is it pride? Is it for fear of being walked over?

Living and Farming God's Way demands that you and I, for the sake of good relationships, be the first to confess our sin and to ask for forgiveness. I can only testify that I have often seen broken relationships, including race relationships, restored within minutes when someone is willing to be the first to confess. And the old man's theory is proven right each and every time: the other party confesses their share too. Thus relationships are restored and *God's Way* becomes visible in

unity and co-operation. When I meet people who are still trapped in their bitterness as a result of apartheid, it isn't a problem for me to confess my guilt and ask for forgiveness again and again. I will do it a thousand times if it is necessary to restore another thousand relationships.

Question: Have you ever taken the trouble to ask forgiveness for the wrong you have done to someone else?

Remember: Someone who has been wronged is completely unreachable and does not even try to understand what you are saying, but $10 + 10 = 100!$

Prayer: † Pray that Christians will always be willing to be the first to confess their share of a problem and to ask for forgiveness. Pray that it will result in relationships being restored.

28

Biblical guidelines for good relationships (6): Conclusion

Read: Matthew 5:16

The loving manner in which we treat people should encourage them to glorify the Father in heaven. Unfortunately that is not always how it happens. On the contrary, people often turn their back on the Lord because of the way Christians behave.

- Therefore we should first admit and confess that most of our relationships are broken and bad. This includes all relationships, from marriage and family relationships through to the relationships between various races and nationalities.
- Remember that unity and co-operation are encouraged by: good communication; joint decisions; a shared vision or dream; giving credit and showing appreciation; deeds of love.
- Restoring broken relationships and building good relationships is hard work. It demands focus. It demands decisiveness. It is one

of the most important things we must teach our children. We must do so purposefully.

- Are you willing, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to do all you are able to:
 1. ... do unto others as God does unto you?
 2. ... put yourself in someone else's shoes?
 3. ... love your neighbour as yourself?
 4. ... behave like Jesus?
 5. ... be first to confess your share of the blame?

YES NOT YET NO

.....

.....

Signature

Date

If you have marked NOT YET or NO, write your reasons down here and start praying about it.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

PART 4 – RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAND

29

Living and Farming God's Way... on God's land

Read: Leviticus 25:23 and Isaiah 62:4

Living and Farming God's Way is not something that happens way out there. It is how you and I must live, work and farm on the piece of land that God has entrusted us with. This brings us to the next important relationships *Living and Farming God's Way* is about: our **relationship with the land** on which we live and farm.

As a farmer, it is always important to know how much water is available to you and what kind of soil, (sand, loam, clay, etcetera) and climate (temperature, rainfall, frost, etc.) you are dealing with. Once you know, you can decide what you can farm with on that particular piece of land. But that is not all you need to know about your farmland. There are other more important questions. You must know that:

- you are living and farming on land that belongs to the Lord;
- you are living and farming on land that God has reconciled to Himself;
- you are living and farming on land over which Christ has authority.

You must know **you are living and farming on land that belongs to the Lord**. The LORD God created heaven and earth (Genesis 1). Therefore the earth and everything in it belongs to Him (Psalm 24:1). That means that all land, including *your* land, belongs to the Lord (Leviticus 25:23). Even if you own land in terms of the laws of the country or the customs of your community (Jeremiah 32:6-12 and Acts 5:4), it still remains God's land. He has only given it into your care. You must work and use the land on God's behalf with love and care. You may not destroy your land in any way. You destroy your land if you keep too much livestock on it; if your farming practices encourage erosion; if you plant the same

crop on the same piece of land year after year; if you allow invasive plants to increase, etcetera. You must use the land (and water) in such a manner that your children and their children will also still be able to use it.

You may not carry out occult or heathen practices to protect your house or your land. You must preserve and protect your land (Genesis 2:15) against the devil and his evil spirits. They pretend the land belongs to them. They pretend they have a right to say what may and what may not be done on the land. They cannot forbid you to dig a hole or to use the river's water. Neither the land nor the water belongs to them. Everything belongs to the Lord, and on God's land you need never listen to the devil and his evil spirits. Don't give evil a hold or a right to reside on God's land!

Question: Now that you know your land belongs to the LORD, is there anything you feel you should do differently? What?

Instruction: Say out loud: *The land I am living and farming on belongs to the Lord. The devil and his evil spirits have no say on my land.* Memorise Isaiah 62:4.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that all agriculturalists will accept that their land belongs to the Lord. † Pray that they will use it with love and care for the purpose He gave it to them.

30

Living and Farming God's Way... on land God has reconciled with Himself

Read: Colossians 1:15-23

You are living and farming on land that belongs to the Lord. But that is not all. You must remember that **you are living and farming on land that God has reconciled with Himself.**

Through His Son, God created everything in heaven and on earth. The things you can see and also the things you cannot see. Through His Son, God also maintains everything He created. The ordinary things God created and not only the people He created, are important to God. And as far as people are concerned, people as **whole beings** (soul, spirit and body – 1 Thessalonians 5:23) are important to God, not only their souls. God created **everything** for the Son, including the land, plants, animals, etcetera.

Adam's sin and disobedience brought God's curse down on all the earth (Genesis 3:17-19). But when the time was right, God sent His Son. Christ took God's curse upon Himself by dying on the cross as One who was cursed (Galatians 3:13). By His blood on the cross, Jesus not only reconciled people with God. In Colossians 1:20 we read that God reconciled **everything** with Himself by His death – **everything** on earth and in heaven. Jesus brought peace to replace enmity. The relationship between God and the land on which you farm, therefore, is no longer a hostile one. The relationship is no longer determined by sin and the curse. Christ restored the relationship completely. Therefore you need not make any ritual sacrifices to reconcile your land to God. You need not sprinkle it with holy water or anoint it with oil. (If you really want to do something, put up a sign of remembrance – cf. Joshua 4:4-7 – not to reconcile your land with God, but to keep reminding you that Christ has already reconciled your land with God.)

Let me explain it like this: Christ has fully reconciled me with God (Colossians 1:22). This reconciliation has changed the relationship between God and me (Romans 5:1), even if it did not put an immediate end to the consequences of sin. I am still living in a body of flesh and blood that is getting older and weaker, a body that can get ill and die. The same is true of creation. It has already been fully reconciled with God even though Romans 8:20-22 says it is still subjected to decay and death. When Christ returns, God will set creation free, change and renew it. Then creation will reflect God's glory to equal the sinless glory of God's children (Romans 8:21).

Everything has been reconciled with God. In faith accept that your land has been reconciled to God, just as you accept in faith that you have

been reconciled with God in Christ. Confess it with your mouth: *My/our land has been reconciled with God.* Do nothing to make this reconciliation lose effect. Do not disobey God (Deuteronomy 28:15 et seq.) or do things He hates (Deuteronomy 18:9-14). Never again put your land under the curse.

Just as you need to confess and strive against sin and disobedience in your own life since you have been reconciled with God, you need to strive against the result of sin on your farm and your land.

- Ask for forgiveness for blood that has flowed on your land and every other sin that has stopped it from raining and the land from yielding good crops (Genesis 4:12; Deuteronomy 28:23; Psalm 107:33-34; Hosea 4:1-3).
- Ask for forgiveness for farming practices of the past that damaged and/or destroyed the land and the area.
- Revoke all covenants (agreements) by which you (or someone who lived on the land before you) dedicated your land to something or someone else: the sun god; idols; devils of the field; ancestors, etcetera. Reject all forms of idolatry.
- If you are aware of *muti* that has been buried on your land to protect it or to bless it, remove it and burn it. Ask the Lord to protect your land and to bless it.
- Proclaim the Name of the LORD on your land. Declare your land to belong to the LORD and to be reconciled with Him.
- Commit yourself to obey the LORD your God in future. Then live and farm on His land like someone who has been reconciled to Him. Let your deeds prove that the relationship between you and LORD has been restored.
- Treat all people with love. Respect them and let justice prevail on your land.
- Cultivate a love for nature and implement conservation practices on your land.
- Respect the natural plant and animal life on your farm. Root out invasive and alien plants and weeds; stop wind and water erosion; allow the veld time to rest, to recover; prevent air and water pollution and put the necessary nutritional elements back into the land; etcetera.

- Question:** Are you doing anything that will make reconciliation lose effect on your land? Remember, Adam's disobedience to God resulted in the curse. Christ's obedience brought reconciliation.
- Instruction:** Say aloud, *The land on which I live and farm belongs to the Lord and has been reconciled to God by Christ.* Now start doing what the last paragraph instructs you to do. Memorise Colossians 1:20.
- Prayer:** † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Thank the Lord that He has reconciled everything, including our land, to Himself. † Pray that the rural and agricultural community will obey God. Pray for wisdom to practically implement the above instructions.

31

Living and Farming God's Way... on land over which Christ has the authority

Read: Ephesians 1:15-23

You are living and farming on land that belongs to the LORD and that He has reconciled to Himself through Christ. But there is a third important truth you need to know about your land. **You are living and farming on land that is under Christ's authority.**

In the beginning God gave authority over the earth to people. People had to reign over the earth and take care of it. When God gave Adam this instruction, creation was perfect and very good – just the way God had made it (Genesis 1:31). The command did not in the first place mean that Adam had to protect the earth against the destructive consequences of sin. Adam had to protect it against all the devil's attempts to take over the control and say over the earth that God had given him. But Adam didn't do what God instructed him to do. By his **disobedience** he opened the door to the devil and handed authority over the earth over to the devil (Luke 4:5-6). Thus the devil became the chief ruler of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4 and John 12:31; 14:30 and 16:10).

But Christ came as a man and by His **obedience** (even His death on the cross) to God again took over the power and authority from the devil. Christ now sits at the right hand of God - ... *far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come* (Ephesians 1:21). Therefore, when He ascended into heaven He said, *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me* (Matthew 28:18). So if you need help, pray to Him. He can help you with everything: Problem animals catching your lambs; late frost that damages the blossoms on your fruit trees; eelworm that attacks your vegetables and hail that threatens to destroy your maize. You may not call in the help of a sangoma, witch or such like to protect you and your land. You need not do it, because no curse has any right to come to rest on you or your land (Proverbs 26:2) unless you give it that right. Ask Jesus for protection, because nothing and no-one has more power or authority than He does.

The devil has no power or authority over you or your land unless you give it back to him. Do not give him any power or authority by being obedient to him. Do not allow him to intimidate you or threaten to harm you if you do not listen to him. After the cross and the empty tomb, Evil has no more power or authority. They are lying when they say they do. All authority belongs to Christ. Nothing belongs to the devil. Christ has given us the authority to conquer the devil and his violence (Luke 10:18-20).

Remember, Christ lives in everyone who believes in Him by His Spirit (Romans 8:9-10). Thus the devil and all his evil spirits fear the Lord's children. The Word says, *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he **will** flee from you* (James 4:7). You need not fear the devil and his demons. You need not fear evil spirits, magicians or anyone claiming to have super-natural powers. You need not fear fate. You need not fear the future, not even death. Christ has power over death and the realm of the dead (Revelations 1:17b-18).

In Christ, you and I received our authority back. Now you can again reign over your land as God's representative with Christ's authority. Therefore you must reign over sin and evil powers as king. As priest,

you *must* intercede for everyone who lives on your land with you and for your farm. As prophet you *must* proclaim *Living and Farming God's Way* in word and deed.

Question: As God's representative, do you exercise Christ's authority over your land and your home, or do you do things that give the devil a hold (Ephesians 4:27)?

Remember: The devil has no authority. Do not give him any authority by your behaviour. Read Ephesians 1:19-21 again.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that the children of God will confirm that Christ has supreme authority in the rural and agricultural community by word and deed.

32

Our relationship with the land

Conclusion

Read: Deuteronomy 11:11-20

In Deuteronomy 11:11-12 we find one of the many promises the LORD gave Israel, Abraham's descendants. *But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven. It is a land the LORD your God cares for; the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end.* (Conditions follow from verse 13.) Israel could count upon there being a special relationship between their LORD and their land. God cares for their land. He takes care of their land and He keeps an eye on their land.

The Word says ... *those who believe are children of Abraham* (Galatians 3:7). I share in all the promises and blessings given to the children of Abraham. Therefore I can be sure of the special relationship between my LORD and the land from which I must make a living. Our land

belongs to Him. He reconciled it to Himself and Christ has authority over it.

Therefore:

Do you admit and confess that your **land belongs to the Lord?** Isaiah 62:4

- Yes or no.....
- Then prove it by *Living and Farming God's Way!*
- Give your land back to the Lord and then handle it with respect and responsibility.

Do you gratefully accept that God **reconciled your land to Himself?** Colossians 1:20

- Yes or no.....
- Then prove it by *Living and Farming Gods Way!*
- Do not do anything on your land to make the reconciliation lose effect.

Do you accept that **all power and authority belongs to Christ** and that He has authority over your land? Ephesians 1:19-21

- Yes or no.....
- Then prove it by *Living and Farming God's Way!*
- The devil has no authority. Do not give him authority by listening to him, his lies or his cunning plans.

Instruction:

- Represent God on your land and exercise the authority that Christ has given you over it!
- Implement *God's Way* principles on His authority, because it is His land. Obey His Word.
- Resist the devil until he flees! Do not give him a hold or authority.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Thank the LORD for the special relationship between Him and the land we live and farm on. † Pray that Christian agriculturalists will be God's representatives and exercise Christ's authority over

their land. † Pray for enough rain at the right time in every area.

Commitment: Lord, because my land belongs to You, because You have reconciled it to You, and because Christ has authority over it, I commit myself to *Living and Farming God's Way*. Out of love for You, I commit myself to use my land with great care and responsibility and to do nothing on it that does not bear your approval.

.....

Name

.....

Date

UNDERSTAND THE BUSINESS OF FARMING

This manual has been developed from practical experiences on the farm, as a conversation guide between existing commercial farmers and future farmers and / or farm workers. The aim of the conversations is to empower the new generation agriculturists for their ownership and / or co-ownership, and also for their greater responsibility in commercial food production.

The manual is available in English and Afrikaans. *Understand the Business of Farming* is one of the *Root Skills* new farmers (and farm workers) must have in order to make a success of their agri-business. Order the manual from **Amos Agrimins'** Head Office.

Tel.: +27(51) 451 1981/874

e-mail: sa@amosagrimin.com

PART 5 – THE WORK WE DO

33

Living and Farming God's Way is work

Work is not punishment for sin

Read: Genesis 1:28 and 3:17-19

What you think of work determines how you are going to work. If you believe work is God's punishment for sin, you certainly won't like work. If you think work is bad, you are going to put it off for as long as you can. When you do work, you will not do it well, but will try to get it done as soon as possible. If you see work only as a way to enrich yourself, you are always going to try to earn as much as possible by doing as little as possible. *Living and Farming God's Way* is only possible if God helps us to change the way we think about work. Let us hear what He has to say about it.

In His Word, God says that work is not a consequence of sin. Work is not something bad or negative. Even if Adam and Eve had never sinned, they would have worked anyway. In the beginning, **before they sinned**, the Lord commanded them to fill the earth, to subdue it and to rule over it (Genesis 1:28). People had to take care of the earth (Genesis 2:15). They had to do work. By working, we are obeying God's instruction to all people. The purpose of our work is in the first place to glorify God by the work He has given us. It is therefore a privilege to work.

Adam did not carry out God's instruction. He did not rule and did not protect earth against evil (did not take care of it). By his disobedience, Adam gave the authority the Lord gave him to the devil (Luke 4:5-7). This destroyed all Adam's relationships: his relationship with God, with Eve and with the earth. The earth was cursed because of what Adam had done and so it was no longer as willing to yield its fruit to people (Genesis 3:17-19 and 4:12a). It would be an effort for people to make a living in future. That is when work became difficult. Adam learned a hard

lesson: Not doing the work God gives you to do has terrible, painful consequences!

Thus we do not work because earth has been cursed. The fact that we must work is not God's punishment for our sin. We work because God said so even before Adam was disobedient and sinned.

Question: What did you think about work until today? How did your thinking influence your work? What do you think about work now?

Instruction: Do not think work is bad only because it is difficult and exhausting. Do not think work is God's punishment for sin. It is a privilege to work and to carry out God's instructions.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Thank the Lord for the privilege of being able to work. † Pray against the false belief of many people in Africa that work is a curse and a punishment.

34

Living and Farming God's Way is work To work is an instruction from the Lord

Read: Exodus 20:9 and 2 Thessalonians 3:7-15

Throughout the Bible the Lord commands us to work: **before** the fall in Genesis 1; **after** the fall in the Old Testament, but also in the New Testament **after** Christ reconciled everything in heaven and on earth with God (Colossians 1:20). It has always been God's will and command that we work.

The fourth commandment does not only state that we should rest regularly. The Lord clearly says that we must work for six days of the week because He worked. (This does not mean that God only worked for six days and then never again – read John 5:17).

The importance of work is illustrated in the second letter Paul writes to the congregation in Thessalonica.

- Firstly Paul talks to the congregation about work under the **Name and authority of the Lord Jesus**. He is not telling them what he thinks and how he feels about work. He is talking on behalf of God when He says they must work.
- Secondly Paul points to the **example** he himself set for them – he worked hard day and night, and expects them to follow his example. He obeyed the Lord's command.
- Thirdly, Paul **commands** the Christians to focus on their work and to earn their own living by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Lord who wants us to work.
- Fourthly Paul says that **laziness and vagrancy should be punished** because it is unacceptable to God. Someone who is lazy is like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes (Proverbs 10:26). Not working is disobeying God – it is a sin in His eyes. Therefore Christians should distance them from fellow-believers who refuse to work. They must pray that they will feel shamed and start to work. But the lazy should receive a heavier punishment – they must not eat. *If a man will not work, he shall not eat* (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Laziness is a sin and therefore causes a great deal of pain and suffering. [Read the following Scriptures: Proverbs 6:9-11; Proverbs 11:29; Proverbs 12:27; Proverbs 14:23; Proverbs 18:9; Proverbs 20:13 and 21:17; Proverbs 24:30-34 and Proverbs 26:13-16.]

Like Paul and the woman in Proverbs 31:10-31, Christians should work hard and set a good example (Acts 20:35 and Ephesians 4:28). Both these examples make one thing clear – one can and may spend long hours working. If you want to farm successfully, you must be willing to work longer, harder and more cleverly than most other people. Look at your watch when you start working in the morning (do not start late), but sometimes forget to check the time when you stop (keep working until your job is done). But keep a balance. Don't make an idol of your work and neglect your relationship with God, your wife, children and the community. God also commands us to rest and therefore He also keeps taking care when you rest.

- Question:** How can you make the Gospel of Christ more attractive to unbelievers through the way you work? Read Titus 2:9-10.
- Instruction:** Teach people what God says about work in the Bible. Be careful if you are an employer and make sure your actions aren't suspect. Your employees may think you are using the Bible to gain greater advantage for yourself by getting them to work harder.
- Prayer:** † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that rural and agricultural communities throughout Africa will obey God's command to work hard. † Pray that Africa will be able to do something about the poverty and famine on the continent by themselves by hard work. (I know the problem is not this simple, but the general belief in Africa that work is a curse, definitely contributes to poverty.)

35

Living and Farming God's Way **Let love motivate you to work well**

Read: Genesis 29:16-30 and Daniel 6:5-6.

Jacob was prepared to work for seven years in order to marry Rachel. He was motivated by love and therefore the seven years were like a few days to him (Genesis 29:20). It is the same today. If you love someone, you are eager to do something for that person and nothing is too much trouble or too horrible to do.

With this attitude we as Christians should do all our work. We love the One who asked us to work, and everything we do, we do for Him and not for people. Put everything into your work and enjoy it. Working for the Lord is a privilege.

Many people think the Lord's work is only spiritual work. It is a lie. Paul tells slaves doing manual labour that they are in the Lord's service. Therefore they should work with all their heart and with joy (Colossians 3:22-4:1 and Ephesians 6:5-9). These commands not only apply to

employees (slaves) but also to employers. Indeed, it is especially when you are the *boss* that you should remember that you are under the authority of the Lord (Colossians 4:1 and Ephesians 6:9).

You and I must remember: We are farming for the Lord. Farming is God's work too. You root out alien plants for the Lord; under His command you make sure that you know what your livestock need; you prune the vineyard for the Lord; garden for the Lord; keep record of your income and expenditure for the Lord; do the farm's paperwork for the Lord; export your apples on behalf of the Lord; plough and plant for the Lord; water your crop for the Lord!

It is a great privilege to farm for the One you love. Therefore do it as well as you can. Follow Daniel's example. Even though he worked for a heathen king, he did his job so well and so right that no-one could find fault with it. His work was of a very high standard because he understood that his real employer was not the heathen king, but the Lord Himself.

After the Lord created everything, He evaluated it and saw that it was very good (Genesis 1:31). *Living and Farming God's Way* means that our work should also be of a very high standard because we are farming for the Lord and striving to achieve His standard.

Question: Consider this: What really motivates you to work?

Instruction: Always do good work of a high standard, no matter who you are doing it for since you love the One who said you should work.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that Christians will work with Jacob and Daniel's attitudes.

36

Living and Farming God's Way Let the ant teach you how to work

Read: Proverbs 6:6-11

When the Lord wants to teach us how to work His land to His glory, He uses the ant as an example

Lesson 1: **Be self-motivated!**

Ants work hard even if they don't have a leader, an overseer or a ruler (Proverbs 6:7). Ants don't work because a leader keeps motivating them or an overseer watches them all the time or a ruler forces them to. God expects His children to be self-motivated. Christians should work equally well and diligently without supervision as with supervision. Let your love for God motivate you. Let the presence of God motivate you. Let the conviction that you are in the Lord's service, motivate you. *Living and Farming God's Way* demands self-motivation.

Lesson 2: **Think and plan ahead**

The ant stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. The ant thinks ahead. Deuteronomy 22:8 gives another good example. Houses had flat roofs in those days and people often sat or prayed on the roof. Therefore the Lord commanded people to think ahead and make a parapet around the roof to prevent someone from falling off. When someone falls to their death it will be too late. Think ahead. Think of ways in which you are going to take care of your children and help them study as far as possible? Do you only plan how to water your trees after you have planted them? Think of everything you need to check before putting sheep into a camp. Think of everything you need from town or must do in town before leaving home. Think and plan your work for the week before deciding what to do every day. You cannot draw up a budget without thinking and planning ahead. *Living and Farming God's Way* requires you to think and plan ahead.

Lesson 3: **Do not procrastinate**

Do the right thing at the right time. This is very important in agriculture. In Isaiah 28:23-29 we read that the Lord gives the farmer the wisdom to do the right thing the right way and at the right time. This is what *Living and Farming God's Way* means: **Do the right thing the right way and at the right time.** Plant when it is time to plant. Wait too late and there won't be enough time for the maize to produce. Wait too long to clear the weeds and they will go to seed and your problem will be worse next

season. If you keep putting off fixing the windmill, servicing the *bakkie*, rooting out alien plants, planning and deciding, your business won't work. Your business will suffer and you will struggle to survive.

God expects His children who farm His land to learn the above three lessons from the ant. This is how God wants us to do our work.

Question: Which one of these three is the biggest problem for you? Why? How can you set it right?

Instruction: Be self-motivated, think and plan ahead, don't procrastinate.

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that the Lord will help all of us in Africa to learn to work from the ant. † Ask the Lord to help you to obey Him.

37

Living and Farming God's Way **Work for the right reasons**

Read: 1 Timothy 5:3-8 and Ephesians 4:28

It is so easy for people to do the right things for entirely the wrong reasons. Recently one of my employees went for his learner drivers' license. He learnt very hard to *pass the test*. It was the right thing to do but the wrong reason. The real reason he had to learn was not to pass the test but to become a good road user and safe driver. The same applies to wearing safety belts. I quickly put on my safety belt when I happen to see a traffic officer next to the road *so that I am not caught without it*. It is the right thing to do, but the wrong reason for doing it. I should always wear the safety belt for the sake of my own safety and not out of fear of being fined.

This lesson may also be applied to our work. Working is the right thing to do. But why do we work?

Some people only work to get rich and to be able to spend more and more money (1 Timothy 6:6-10 and Proverbs 23:4-5). Other people only work until they have enough to retire (Luke 12:19). To them it is not about the work, but about the money. Other people only work to be seen and praised, to gain people's favour (Colossians 3:22).

Work is a means to a goal. The Bible gives a few important reasons why we *must* work:

- HONOUR: We must work because God says so. We honour Him by obeying His instruction.
- EAT: We must work to be able to eat and to take care of our families (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 and 1 Timothy 5:4 & 8). Eating here refers to our basic needs.
- GIVE: We must work to be able to have something to give to the poor (Ephesians 4:28). To give makes one happier than to receive (Acts 20:35).
- SERVE: We serve others by working. They benefit from what we do (1 Timothy 6:2). *Living and Farming God's Way* demands that we farm in such a way that the country (and Africa) will benefit from our work.
- OUR WORK SUCCEEDS US: In Revelation 14:13 we read that our work has eternal value. If we are in God's service here, **as agriculturalists**, and do everything for Him, we will not stand before Him with empty hands one day. He will reward us for our work as He promised He would (Colossians 3:24). After all, it is our work that proves whether we are merely religious and whether we serve Him for 24 hours a day.

If you work with the above purpose in mind, you will be blessed. You will feel satisfied, because you are ruling as God commanded you to rule. You will feel worthy, proud and happy. Doing nothing and not meaning anything to anyone, is bad. Living off charity destroys your self-image and sense of self-worth.

In *Living and Farming God's Way* we must never forget why we are working. Doing the right thing for the wrong reasons is meaningless.

- Question:** What has the Lord taught you about work lately? How will it change your life and the way you farm?
- Instruction:** Start teaching others what the Bible says about our daily work. *Living and Farming God's Way* is impossible if we don't know what the Lord says about our labour.
- Prayer:** † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that Christians will work hard but never make their work their god. † Pray that self-enrichment will never be the purpose for our labour.

BASIC TRUTHS OF THE WORD

Many agriculturists experience a need for a discipleship course for the employees in their service. Many employers have a need to follow such a course themselves.

Here is the product you have been looking for. This unique course is based on the six colours of the Wordless Book. It guides the employee to eventually explain the whole message of the Bible with the six colours as basis.

At the same time the Learner has the opportunity to receive our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

The course contains ten books, two Wordless Book sets, and all the assessments. The learner will also receive a certificate at the end of the successful completion of the course. The course is available in English, Afrikaans, Sesotho, Setswana, isiZulu and isiXhosa and Shona (Zimbabwe).

This course has been completed by thousands.

Contact **Amos Agrimins'** Head Office for more details.

Tel.: +27(51) 451 1981/874

e-mail: sa@amosagrimin.com

PART 6 – LET THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE, IN

38

The salvation of unbelievers – to God’s glory (1) Use God’s mighty weapons

Read: 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

God’s mighty weapons make the devil quake with fear. He is powerless when believers use these weapons, because he always suffers another defeat and worse humiliation. Unlike Ephesians 6, this text does not name the weapons but makes it very clear that the weapons are powerful by virtue of the victory Christ has already gained over evil. In this context it is clear that the message of the Gospel and prayer are part of these weapons. I would like to dwell on prayer. We have already seen that God makes that which He would like to do dependent on the prayers and co-operation of His children. This also applies to salvation.

Prayer in the Name of Jesus Christ has a destructive effect on evil. Therefore the devil does everything he can to prevent you and me from praying. So be careful!

- Do not keep putting off prayer until you no longer have time to pray. Discipline yourself and make prayer your first priority.
- Praying continually and praying short prayers every so often is good, it is a privilege. However, it should never replace your long, focused times of prayer. Think of Nehemiah. He did both (Nehemiah 1:4-10, and 2:4; 4:4; 5:19; 6:9; 6:14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31). Think of Jesus when He prayed (Mark 1:35 and Luke 5:15).
- Do not limit your prayers to, *Lord, think of ...* and *Lord, be with ...*. Give content to your prayers. Word content! Pray God’s Word!
- Guard against selfish prayers and prayers that are only about your temporary needs. Use the privilege of prayer to destroy evil’s work; to pray for the salvation of unbelievers.

- Do not allow your prayer meetings to turn into a talk programme about prayer or spend the time making endless lists of prayer topics. Pray!

Paul uses three very important words in 2 Corinthians 10:4.

- **Dunatos** = with this word he describes God's weapons as *mighty* and very *strong*. The word *dunamis* is sometimes also translated in the New Testament as *miracle* (eg Matthew 7:22). God's weapons perform miracles.
- **Kathairesis** = to destroy; to break down; to demolish; to remove someone from his position (figuratively).
- **Ochuroma** = stronghold; fort; jail; position from which you have a hold on something or someone.

Paul uses a beautiful image here. By prayer we are demolishing the strongholds of evil. We declare that the devil has been dislodged and removed from his position and no longer has a say over or a hold on us. Sometimes we immediately see the answer to our prayers, but sometimes it seems as though nothing is happening. But that does not mean that our prayers are powerless and ineffectual. The following image may help us to understand what happens:

There are two ways to demolish a building. You can use a crane with a very large metal ball to knock it down. Each time the metal ball hits the building, more cracks appear and another part crumbles. In this way the building is broken down *over time* until nothing is left. Big buildings are sometimes prepared for demolishing by carefully placing explosives in the right places throughout the building. When everything is ready, a button is pushed and the whole building comes crushing down *within seconds*. This is how it is with our prayers. Sometimes the Lord demolishes the strongholds of evil piece by piece – in answer to each prayer. And sometimes He waits until all the prayers needed have been prayed before demolishing the stronghold in an instant.

Therefore, do not be discouraged. Keep praying for the strongholds of the devil to be destroyed. It does not matter whether God starts doing it immediately in answer to each prayer or waits until all the prayers have

been prayed before doing it in an instant. The strongholds will be destroyed in answer to believers' prayers!

Question: Why are believers so loath to pray even though prayer is the most powerful, deadly weapon that God has given us?

Instruction: Confess your prayerlessness – it is a sin (1 Samuel 12:23). If your prayers are mostly about yourself and your temporary needs, confess that too (James 4:1-3).

Prayer: Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray that the Lord will reveal the greatness of His love for the world to you so that you can pray for the salvation of people with greater urgency. † Ask that believers will again experience the power of prayer and so set about praying in earnest.

39

The salvation of unbelievers – to God's glory (2) Pray that the veil will be lifted

Read: 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 and Acts 26:18

The job of the Church of Christ is to bring light to the darkness; To establish the God's Kingdom; To win those who are lost for Christ; To make disciples. It is all about expansion. Those who are still without hope and without God must be brought into the fold. Those who are under evil's rule, must be brought under the rule of Christ (Colossians 1:13).

Living and Farming God's Way forbids you to think it is just about you or about those who have been saved. It is about God and His glory! The more people are saved, the more God is praised and thanked. The more people are saved, the more people can honour Him by *Living and Farming God's Way*. God wants everyone to be saved (Matthew 18:14; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; 2 Peter 3:8-9).

There are many ways to become involved in winning people for Christ.

- By your testimony – when you talk about the Gospel (Acts 1:8).
- By the example you set – when you live the Gospel (Philippians 1:27).
- By your contributions – when you give money (2 John 5-8).
- By training – when you teach people or have them trained (2 Timothy 2:2).
- By your prayers – when you pray for the spread and victory of the Word (2 Thessalonians 3:1); for lost people and that the Lord will send workers to gather the harvest (Matthew 9:36-38).

Prayer is the easiest, cheapest and most effective way to win people for Christ. Yet it is the one thing Christians do least. *Talk to God about people, before you talk to people about God.* The question is: What must we ask God when we pray for unbelievers?

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 says there is a veil that needs to be removed!

Unbelievers' minds have been *blinded*. It is as though a bag has been pulled over their heads. They cannot see that Christ is Lord and Saviour, because they can see nothing. The veil needs to be removed. Their minds must be opened. They need a revelation, or they will never be able to see. That is what we need to pray for: That the Lord will lift the veil that is blinding their minds.

2 Corinthians 4:4 says that believers cannot see the light of the Gospel.

Their minds (eyes) have been blinded. Think of a camera. The shutter closes so that no light will fall on the lens. No matter how beautiful the view, if you do not open the shutter by pressing the camera switch to take a photo, no image will be captured. This is exactly what 2 Corinthians 4:4 says happens to unbelievers. The Gospel proclaims the glory of Christ and that He is truly God. However, because the shutter to their minds is closed, because the veil has not been lifted from their minds, they cannot see this glorious image of Christ. Therefore you and I should in the first place pray that the Lord will lift the veil from unbelievers' minds so that they will be able to understand the message of the Gospel and see who Christ really is.

- Question:** Two people listen to the same wonderful message. One is deeply moved, but no impression is made on the other. Why does this happen?
- Instruction:** The Lord is laying someone in your heart. Accept it as an indication that He wants to save that person but wants you to ask Him to remove the veil. Start praying for that person from today and keep praying until God removes the veil and saves him / her.
- Prayer:** † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Pray for the person the Spirit has lain on your heart. † Pray for the salvation of agriculturalists and agricultural leaders.

40

The salvation of unbelievers – to God's glory (3) Pray against things that give evil a hold on unbelievers

Read: 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

God has equipped us for battle with His mighty weapons. We can perform miracles with these weapons and destroy the strongholds of evil. Strongholds are the things that give evil a hold on unbelievers. They are held hostage in these strongholds. But Christ came to proclaim *freedom for the prisoners ...* (Luke 4:18). These strongholds have three properties:

1. **Logismos:** This Greek word refers to human logic and patterns of thought: the fixed way people think in terms of the knowledge and experience they have gained over time. It refers to theories people have and in which they believe. What people believe determines how they behave. If you believe the world consists of two separate parts and that God is limited to the spiritual or supernatural realm, it will influence your entire life. Then you need not take any notice of Him for the greater part of your life. The belief that other races are inferior causes racism, prejudice and injustice. Whatever you read in the Bible about your neighbour and other people, you understand and explain in terms of your conviction (opinion = logismos). Someone who grows up in a

church in which miracles do not occur, develops the conviction (opinion) that miracles are no longer possible. In time this conviction becomes so strong that when the person reads about miracles and wonders in the Bible, he/she explains them in such a way that they need not occur in our day and age. People's convictions are so strong and they are so caught up in them, that they change the Bible to suit their convictions, instead of changing their convictions to suit the Bible.

Intellectualism, materialism, atheism, racism, evolutionism, false and traditional religions (Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Animism) inferiority and a feeling of rejection are all patterns of thought and theories the evil uses to keep people captive. These patterns of thought and convictions are so strong that you cannot change them with arguments and reasoning. You need to use God's mighty weapons to bombard these strongholds with a purpose until they have been destroyed.

2. **Hupsoma**: This Greek word may be translated as haughty or proud. The devil exalted himself and wanted to be God. After he was thrown out of heaven, he sowed the seed of pride in people. Pride is an ancient sin! Now people refuse to bow before God and the truth of His Word. Pride, conceit and *me, myself and I*, are what blinds people to the truth of the Gospel. People do not want to admit to and confess their sin; They do not want to accept that they are dependent on God; They do not want to believe in a gospel that proclaims that they cannot save themselves, but can only be saved by faith in Christ. You must use the mighty weapons of God to destroy pride and conceit in people's lives by prayer. It is *hupsoma* (pride and self-exaltation) that makes people who hold positions of power abuse that power. It is *hupsoma* that makes people want to farm *their way*, instead of *God's way* and so reject *Living and Farming God's Way*. The spirit of *hupsoma* says, *I will not be prescribed to by anyone or anything!*

3. **Noema**: This Greek word may be translated with the word thought. It refers to the spontaneous thoughts and plans the devil puts in people's minds and that he uses to tempt people. The devil is never satisfied when people suffer only. He wants them to sin against God in

their suffering. He wants them to handle their suffering the wrong way and so cause even more suffering. As the father of the lie, (John 8:44) he lies to people and keeps giving them the wrong advice, plans and solutions. Once people listen to them, he gets a hold over them and they are safe in his stronghold. The only plans they can think of then is the next scheme the devil puts in their minds. We must put an end to these thoughts, plans and schemes through prayer. They are the strongholds we must destroy with God's mighty weapons.

When you pray for an unbelieving friend or family member, ask the Lord to reveal the strongholds keeping that person from salvation to you. If you know the person well you will probably know what the strongholds are. Pray with a purpose and ask the Lord to destroy these strongholds.

Question: Which strongholds do you think play a large part in the life of the rural and agricultural community?

Prayer: † Respond to God's Word in prayer. † Again pray for the person the Spirit lays on your heart. † Pray for the destruction of strongholds and the salvation of agriculturalists and agricultural leaders.

The fruit of BASICS in your life!

On page 3 the purpose of BASICS is given as:

- * to help you **understand** what *Living and Farming God's Way* is all about;
- * to challenge you to **evaluate** your life and your business and, if necessary, make **adaptations**. To get from where we are to where God wants us to be, demands continual change and growth;
- * to **equip** you to **explain** *Living and Farming God's Way* to other agriculturalists and to challenge them to commit themselves to it;
- * to help you **intercede with a purpose** – for yourself, but also for the entire rural and agricultural community.

The question now is: To what extent did *AMOS* achieved this purpose with this publication?

1. What new insight did you obtain working through BASICS? Explain the meaning of *Living and Farming God's Way* shortly:

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Make an evaluation of your own life and farming practices compared to *Living and Farming God's Way*.

* Name two aspects in which you actually do well. Thank God for that:

.....

.....

.....

*Name two aspects that need to be changed / improved:

.....
.....

3. Have you communicated to agriculturists and explained *Living and Farming God's Way* to them? YES.....NO.....

4. I challenge you to seclude yourself for at least one day in a place of solitude (cf. Luke 5:16). Revise everything you have learned the last 40 days and pray on everything the Lord puts on your heart. Pray that ***Living and Farming God's Way*** will become the most important characteristic of communities in Africa. If the LORD gives you a specific command, make a note of it and make sure that you obey Him speedily.

When will you be doing it?

What is the LORD laying upon your heart?

.....
.....

5. What will Africa look like in a few years time if ***Living and Farming God's Way*** will not remain a mere slogan, but become a life-style of the rural and agricultural community? Write down a few characteristics of this Africa:

.....
.....
.....
.....