

## **We Represent One Nation BUT we are NOT all on the same Team**

The Old Testament records how Moses led God's chosen people (the people of promise) from Egypt, thru the wilderness, to the Promised Land.

Today, there are many 'Moses', the Pastors (Shepherds), each with the responsibility to lead God's children (flock), out of the 'World' (Egypt), thru the dry places of cleansing, teaching and preparation (Wilderness) the walk of Faith, into Relationship and the promises of God provided by Jesus, the very Kingdom of God (Promised Land).

Not all those who were rescued from Egypt, entered the Promised Land. God brought them immediately to Palestine but only Joshua & Caleb of the 12 spies (tribes) had a report of Faith. They trusted God thru their 'Leader' and saw it with God's eyes, the eyes of Faith, not their own. Many were destroyed by complaining and ungratefulness, and by giving up on Moses (& God), and returning to the ways of the World (Egypt) by trusting in it instead (thru their gods & idols). God sent them back into the wilderness 40 years for that generation to perish. Numbers 13 14

You are a member of His chosen people, thru Jesus, Christian, a child of promise, BUT are you with the right Moses for YOU?

Just as there is 'One Body' having many parts or members, so to the 'Greater Body', or the whole Body of Christ on Earth is one Body, having many parts, not having the same function. Within each Country and each City. It is therefore unjust to compare Pastors or Congregations, or numbers or Visions, as each body part within the Body, has a different task or part to play, as we, as individuals, within our own church group (Body), have differing responsibilities, giftings, talents and strengths (and anointing) for our purpose. You could use: expression, strength, or 'flavour'.

Heard of Brian Houston of Hillsong, or Danny Guglielmucci of Edge? (both in Australia) One Church is known for Worship music and the other for Hospitality. God uses 'men' after His own heart, to display Himself to us, each a 'flavour' or aspect, and God has many names.

Having said this, criticising other Church groups, Church Leaders and the members of their congregations, by comparing them (their role) with the group you are part of and their vision and purpose is wrong.

I believe my Pastor is the best! A gift from the Throne room of Heaven. But is he the only Pastor that preaches the Word, walks the walk of Faith, a Godly example, a diligent, disciplined servant of our Lord? Of course NOT! But he is the best for me.

In the same breath if you are not happy or fulfilled where you are (assuming it's not you) then you may be in the wrong 'body'. So DON'T complain about the Pastor, the Vision and it's direction. DON'T complain at all. WE need to be grateful, trusting and respectful. Remember soldiers salute the bars and stars on their superior officer's uniform. Their responsibility (role) and the authority that comes with it. They don't have to respect the officer himself, he needs to earn that.

So, if you need to move to another church (not out of bad attitude, rebellion or 'offence'), that has a 'flavour' more akin to you, then don't receive the flak that often comes from Church moves. Let the Pastor know why, that he may give a blessing to it. Anyway, even if you don't get a blessing, just as the Pastor has a God given Vision and Purpose, so do you, and you need to be obedient to it.

Picture it this way. When our Country sends athletes to the Olympics, they are all from the same Nation. There are many Teams and individuals, each with the own Coach. Hockey, basketball, swimmers, rowers, athletics etc. If my strength is swimming, I'll be on the swimming team, not the hockey team. I may be good at hockey but not good enough to be on the team. I am much better (and happier) at swimming, and I *excel* in it.

Likewise, the hockey coach may be the best in the world, but probably a failure, or so so, as a swimming coach. He would not get the same results.

While we are in training, we are not there to hinder the preparation of other teams. We should encourage each other, as we are representing the same Nation and all share in the glory of its achievements. The contestants in the Olympics, let nothing get in the way of what they have sacrificed so much for, trained for, to run the race and win the prize.

We too, are in training, being prepared for our individual and team events. Let nothing interfere with your intensive training, for the race we are running. At the end there is a prize for those who *finish*.

There is a party at the end of all our events, that all the teams are invited to, “the Marriage supper of the Lamb”.

Remember, not everyone is selected to be on the squad. To qualify, it must be your life, your purpose, your goal. You must put your everything into it. (be Kingdom minded).

## **Finish the Race**

While digging a patch of soil for my mother, I began to tire towards the end. My flesh protested and my mind agreed, bombarding me with thoughts of quitting.

I looked at what I had already done, and I was pleased with it, and then I looked at the small portion to be done. I couldn't see myself finishing it. It is obvious that the first part to be dug is easier than the end, but it takes the *same* effort.

As I stood there, *having a break* (better than burning out and giving up), the Lord likened what I was doing, to a marathon runner competing in the Olympics. I pondered on the years of preparation, the sacrifices, diet, giving up pleasure time, getting up early, running tens of kilometres per day for years, foregoing prosperity, even relationship, in exchange for the chance to run the race and win.

Then I pictured this athlete having completed the preparation, competing in the Olympics Marathon, only to see him drop out of the race, exhausted, 1 kilometre short of the 34 kilometres to be ran. The Lord then asked me what this athlete would be remembered for. The success in gaining the right to compete? The years of sacrifice? The thousands of hours and kilometres of training? The 33 he competed in well?

The answer, of course, is that he didn't finish. Failure. Those watching (World) have no way of perceiving the difficulty, and the sacrifice (except other athletes), and to them 1 kilometre is no different to the others. The longer we run, the more tired we get. But there is an end to every race. A place where we finish. It is no wonder that we have seen athletes crawl hands and knees, totally exhausted, to the finish line, and don't they who see this, crown them with applause and praise for finishing, irrespective of position. Luke 14:29

To win the race for God, we only need to finish it. 1 Cor 9:24-27. There are many unbelievers including family, watching your progress. They will not praise you for what you have done if you give up. But they will mock you, behind your back, in your failure and be relieved in the thought that they were right and you were wrong.

But there are far more watching from Heaven, who know the difficulties and they continually urge you to keep going. Aren't you glad Jesus didn't give up? The finish line is just over the rise. If the going is getting tough and you are getting thoughts of quitting, then you must be getting towards the end of that patch of soil.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood” Heb 12:1-4

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Jude 1:20

**Summing up.** Find the right group that you belong in, even if it meets further away. Put your heart into your preparation and service, being led by the Spirit. Don't give up on God, but have a break if you need one. Have an attitude of gratitude. Thanksgiving is Praise (for what has been given to you or done for you). In the Word, we are to pray (**ask, which gives permission**) with **thanksgiving (gratefulness)**. This is a major key.

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