

Do you know what you are doing?

(Do you know who you are?)

SOMETIMES A PERSON IS SERVING THE LORD BUT IS NOT IN TOUCH WITH THE TREMENDOUS DEPTH OF THAT HE OR SHE IS DOING. TO KNOW THE INCARNATIONAL NATURE OF "WORKS OF SERVICE" IS TO BE INWARDLY CHARGED WITH VISION, COMMITMENT, ENTHUSIASM, PERSEVERANCE, AND JOY IN MINISTRY. KNOWING THAT JESUS IS IN YOU AS GOD WAS IN HIM CARRIES YOU FAR BEYOND THE IDEA OF VOLUNTEERING TO DO A TASK. IT EVEN CARRIES YOU BEYOND THE OBEDIENT ACT OF ANSWERING HIS CALL TO USE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN MINISTRY. KNOWING THAT JESUS IS IN YOU HELPS YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE JESUS' ARMS, HANDS, FEET AND HEART FOR OTHER. ACCEPTING THIS BIBLICAL TEACHING HAS TREMENDOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR LAY PASTORS.

TO SEE JESUS IS TO SEE GOD

To look at Jesus is to look at God. Jesus said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'show us the Father'? Don't you know that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?" (John 14:9 & 10) Again, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me." (John 12:44 & 45)

TO SEE YOU IS TO SEE JESUS

We believe Jesus. To look at him is to look at God. God became human flesh so he could be seen, heard, touched and known personally. John the disciple testified that he heard, saw and touched the son – God incarnated in human flesh. (I John 1:1) Paul the Apostle wrote, "It was God personally present in christ..." (II Corinthians 5:19 ANT). The dictionary definition of

incarnation is "Embodiment, especially in human form."

We can understand, then, when Jesus said, "As the Father sent me, I am sending you," he was referring to his incarnational presence in you. To see you is to see Jesus. You can truly say, "He or she who looks at me sees the one who sent me."

You are Jesus incarnate in human flesh. Your new birth, produced by the Holy spirit, was the occasion of Jesus coming into your life. You are included in his prayer to his Father in John 17, "I have given them the glory you gave me.../ *in them* and you in me." The incarnation of Jesus in you is taught very clearly in Colossians 1:27, "....The glorious riches of this ministry, which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory." Because he is in us we, "with unveiled faces reflect the Lord's glory." We are being transformed more and more into his kindness. (II Corinthians 3:18)

Fangpane put it this way in his book, The House of the Lord, "Almighty God, in effect, said to his son, 'I resurrected you, bringing you through all eternity to seat you next to me on my throne. I want you to rest here at my right hand. The Holy Spirit will unite you with those who believe; especially, they will actually become your body, and those living on the earth will become as your feet'."

IMPLICATIONS FOR LAY PASTORS

This almost unbelievable truth has tremendous implications for lay pastors! They are:

FIRST – You are being sent by Jesus just as Jesus was sent by the Father.

SECOND – Jesus is in you just as the Father was in him.

THIRD – When people see you, hear you and touch you they are seeing, hearing and touching (or being touched by) your Lord.

FOURTH – As Jesus remained close to the Father you are to remain close to

Jesus. He is the source of your spiritual life, your love for and success in ministry. Don't go it alone!

The reality of the continuing incarnation must be learned, i.e., known theologically and experientially. To truly know this requires a paradigm shift, not just taking in the information. "Metanoia" has to take place – a shift of the mind, an awakening, a recreation of the self, a transcendence of the mind's normal comprehensive capacity.

The word metanoia is not found in many modern dictionaries but is a very useful word to help understand what we mean by "learning" or "paradigm shift". The word is Greek, combining meta, which means "above" or "beyond" as in "metaphysics", with noia, which means "mind." Senge writes in **The Fifth Dimension**, "To grasp the meaning of metanoia is to grasp the deeper meaning of learning, for learning also involves a fundamental shift or movement of mind Learning has become synonymous with taking in information Yet, taking in information is only distantly related to real learning." His example makes the point clear, "It would be nonsensical to say, 'I just read a great book about bicycle riding—I've now learned that'."

Real learning makes it possible to see something in a way we never saw it before. Real learning enables us to do something we were never able to do before. To truly learn the teaching about the incarnational reality, Jesus in us, gives us a brand new perception of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ and to be doing the ministry he called us to do.

To learn this greatly deepens the caring activity and effectiveness of Lay Pastors in these four ways:

1. They keep in close touch with Jesus as Jesus kept in close touch with the Father.
2. They have a servant mind-set, for Jesus was a servant.
3. They realize how greatly important P A C E is;

Prayer – Jesus prayed. "He looked toward heaven and prayed." John 17:1

Available – Jesus was available to people. "A man with leprosy came and knelt before him. . . ." Matthew 8:2

Contact – Jesus took the initiative in contacting his people. "Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore . he called out to them . . ." John 21: 4 & 5

Example – Jesus expected to be an example. After washing his disciples' feet he said, "I have set you an example." John 13:15

4. They feel accountable to Jesus for what they do and how they do it. Vision, motivation, perseverance, faithfulness and excellence flow from the inner sense of being personally accountable to him

A FINAL THOUGHT

The ultimate expectations nourish the spirits of lay pastors who are learning and living the reality of the continuing incarnation, highly motivating them to press on:

1. Hearing Jesus words, "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . come and share your master's happiness" (Matthew 25:23) and,
2. Receiving the future bonus, "When the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away." (1 Peter 5:4)

so, this is what you are doing, who you are and why you are doing what you are doing; being the body, feet, hands and heart of Jesus to your people. "He who receives you receives me." Matthew 10:40