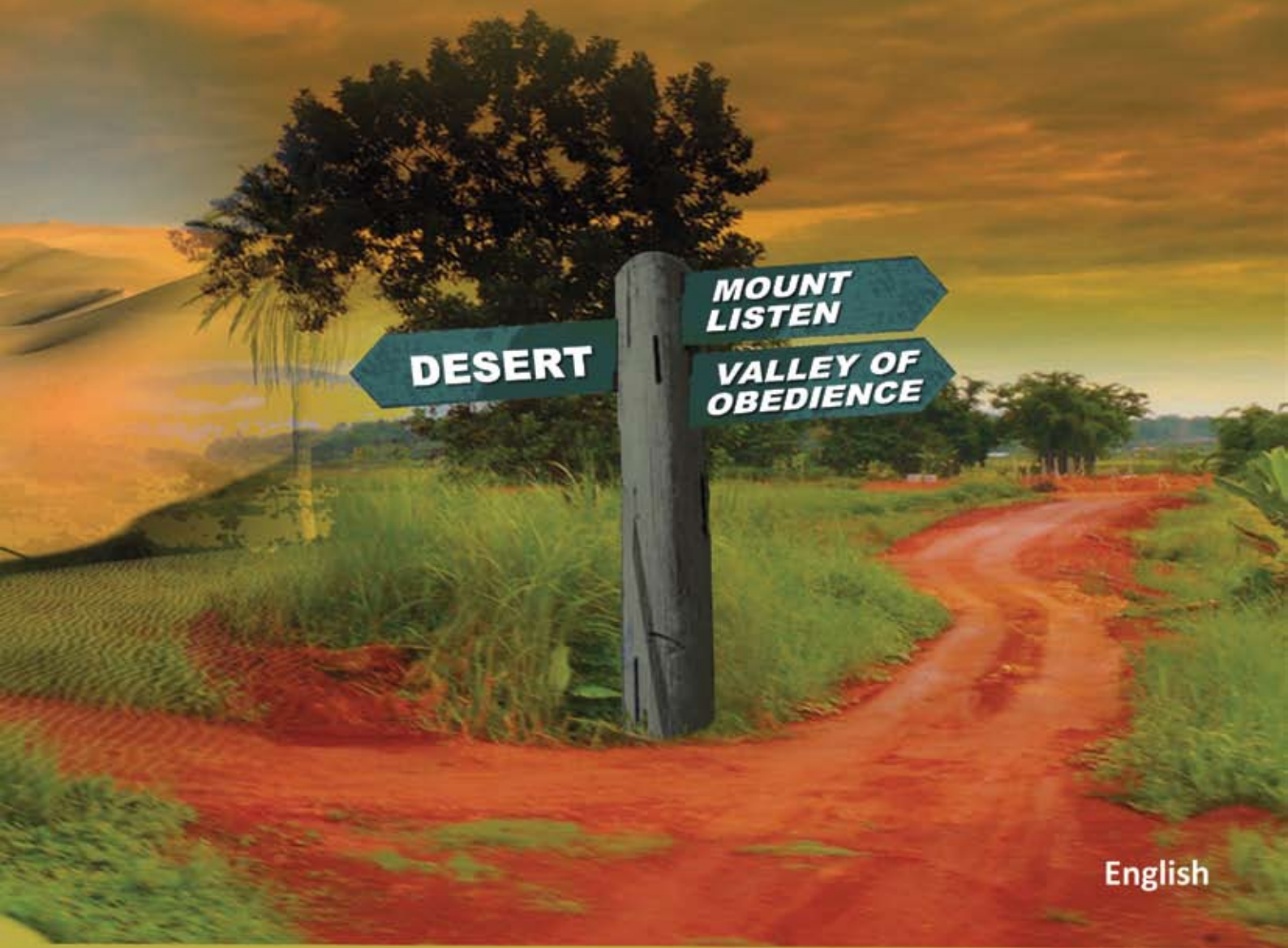




40 Day Prayer Focus

Agricultural Transformation and Land Reform



The Wordless Book

“A colorful Way to Share the Gospel”

The *Wordless Book* originally comprised of only three pages – **Black**, **Red** and **White**. It was introduced by Charles Spurgeon in 1866 when preaching at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. His sermon was entitled “*The Wordless Book*”. Mr. Spurgeon told of an elderly pastor who had put three pages of these colors together, and often referred to them to remind himself of his own sinfulness (black), of Christ’s blood poured out for him (red), and of the “whiter-than-snow” purification, as granted by the Lord.

It is not known exactly when the **Gold** page was added, but that brought another dimension to the book. It depicted the glory of God and his heavenly home. Nine years later, D.L. Moody used the book of colors at a children’s service. An estimated 12 000 people attended to listen to his message about *A book with four pages*: Black, Red, White and Gold.

When Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) began to print the little book in 1939, they added another page of **Green**, to represent Christian growth.

In 1993, **AMOS** was founded by Hennie and Janetta Viljoen. **AMOS** realized the value of the *Wordless Book* in teaching the gospel to the illiterate. They, however, wanted it to tell the complete message of the Bible, and therefore in 1994 added the final color of **Blue** to the *Wordless Book*, to remind us of the promised return of Christ.

It later came to light that the International Children’s Ministry Institute (ICMI) had the same vision, and had already added a blue page in 1988.



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Our greatest opportunity!

As agriculturalists, we are facing the biggest challenge in the history of our country. We have the opportunity now to make history instead of becoming its victims. By carefully **listening** to the Lord and then **obeying** Him with all our hearts, we can and will radically change agriculture and send it in a new direction that will stun the world. God will turn our fear and pain into birth pains, and birth pains are not the end, but the beginning of a new beginning, a new life, a new future.

We are standing at a fork in the *dirt* road. This is a *kairos* moment (the right and deciding time) for agriculture. We have the opportunity **now** to make good choices and the right decisions. We have the opportunity **now** to take God at His word and to experience what He promises in His Word to do for His obedient children. Or we can decide to stay as we are because we don't believe that God is able to honour His promises and to grant us real victory. In this case, we will miss many wonderful new experiences with God and fall back into /deadly fear. If we later do decide that it would be better to **listen** and **obey** the Lord, it may be too late. That is what happened to Israel (Numbers 13-14. Take note of 14:39-45). Forty years later the next generation would get another opportunity to take hold of what God promised and to experience His miracles.

I have spent a lot of time in prayer about this *kairos* moment in agriculture. I wanted to and still want to hear what the Lord says. This is the answer I have received so far:

1. **A dangerous time lies ahead for agriculturalists –regardless whether we are obedient or disobedient to the Lord**

The Lord says we should be **dangerously obedient** to Him. The time for playing safe is past. Our obedience must take us to the point at which it is life threatening if God does not help us in a supernatural way. Think about Moses – he was in mortal danger with the sea in front of him and the whole Egyptian army behind him (Exodus 14; also read Hebrews 11:24-27). Think about Abraham. He was prepared to sacrifice his only son on the altar. Had God not intervened, Abraham's descendants and his whole future would have been lost (Genesis 22).



Think about Gideon. At the Lord's command he took 300 men to war against an army of more than 30 000 Midianites. That was life threatening obedience (Judges 6-7). Consider Jehoshaphat's obedience. He demonstrated his trust in God's promises by putting men singing God's praises leading the army (2 Chronicles 20). In human terms that is a pretty silly thing to do.

If the Lord did not intervene and perform miracles, these men would have died! Obeying God was life threatening to them all, and yet they all obeyed Him! And so they had first-hand experience that NOTHING is impossible for God.

Think about Jesus. His obedience led to His death (Philippians 2:5-8). But it also conquered evil and made us more than victorious.

The devil, the world, and our own sinful nature are always trying to intimidate us to prevent us from obeying God. Yet all of them have already been conquered (John 16:33). Therefore, the Lord expects us to do what He tells us, *even if it **seems** life threatening* to us. He is more than willing to perform miracles to help, save and protect us. He makes it possible for His children to carry out His commands, even those that seem dangerous.

But the Lord reminded me that **disobedience is life threatening too**. Think about the prophet, Jeremiah. The Lord called him before his voice had broken. He was still a child but his excuses made no impression on the Lord. He equipped Jeremiah for his job and said, "*Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them.*" (Jeremiah 1:17). Read the whole of Jeremiah 1. If Jeremiah allowed himself to be intimidated and dared to disobey the Lord, the Lord would have opposed him. Now *that* is life threatening!

The choice is ours, says the Lord. Seeming danger because we obey Him or real danger because of our disobedience.



2. It is all about the glory and honour of God!

God wants to be glorified before the world by our obedience. He wants the world to be stunned and surprised by His power and His ability to solve complex agricultural problems and create a good future for all agriculturalists. But if we choose to disobey Him, He will protect His honour by calling us to account before the world. He cannot keep quiet when His children, like the world, ignore Him. Then the world could conclude that God is like us, like the people. Read Psalm 50!

The choice is ours! Are we going to honour God by doing what He says? Or do we want Him to take care of His own honour? Will He have to force us to be accountable (in all kinds of painful ways and in order to convince us to return to Him) (Amos 4:6-13)? Or will we wilfully take a stand now and be radically obedient to Him?

What God wants becomes clear in texts such as Deuteronomy 30:19 and Ezekiel 18:30-32. He shows us life and death, blessing and punishment. Then He pleads with his people to choose life and blessing. That is His will for people - it is His will for each and every agriculturalist.

The content of these 40 daily portions devotions are really very simple. The front page says everything: You are being challenged to enter into a discussion on agricultural transformation and land reform with God. **Listen** to what He is saying, and then go and **obey!** The alternative is self-destructive. Therefore, I call on you, plead with you, beg you in the Name of Jesus: Let us listen to the Lord! Let us honour our King before the world by being absolutely obedient to Him! Let us give God the opportunity to demonstrate His greatness, His wisdom and His power. We can make a success of land reform because NOTHING is impossible for God.

Hennie Viljoen



Background

AMOS published its first study on land reform in 2003 under the title, ***LAND REFORM – A Christian viewpoint and action***. It was a first attempt with the purpose of putting a few thoughts and perspectives on the table in order to stimulate the discussion on land reform in agricultural circles, among Christian farmers and the church. During **2004**, we again discussed land reform during the ***40-Day Prayer Focus on Agriculture***. Both these studies remain relevant and agriculturalists who are earnestly seeking answers and solutions to the national land crisis should take the trouble to obtain these studies free of charge from AMOS' web site and to study them thoroughly. The complete content of those studies cannot be repeated here. **Visit www.amosafrica.net and click on *40-Day Prayer Focus*.**

Now, seven years later, we have not made much headway with the process in South Africa. There are many different reasons for this. At the beginning of 2001, president Zuma said that more than 90% of the land reform projects in agriculture could not be described as successful. But in spite of the many failed projects, pressure is on the increase to speed up the pace of land reform in order to achieve goals. The Minister of Agriculture, Ms Tina Joemat-Pettersson said in Beeld of 15 May 2010 that stale mate has been reached between farmers and the state. *“The farmers refuse to budge, but somewhere along the line they will have to realise how important the land question is. If we are not careful, or if we do not participate, we will end up in the same state as Zimbabwe. If there is no distribution of land, the same thing will happen here and it will make Zimbabwe look like a teddy bears’ picnic.”* She continues by saying, *“Everyone is against the idea of nationalisation, but no one is coming up with solutions. No one is offering other suggestions or models ... And what will happen then? Nationalisation will happen.”* (Freely translated)

Thus, it is in the interest of the Kingdom of God and of national importance for Christians to become actively involved in the land reform process and in the comprehensive transformation of agriculture. ***LIVING AND FARMING GOD’S WAY*** must be purposefully pursued and must be implemented in obedience to God.

Hennie Viljoen



PART 1

FOUNDATIONS FOR TRANSFORMATION

Day 1

You must be sure!

Read: Romans 3:20-27 and 1 John 5:11-13

Think about the Wordless Book (you can order it from *AMOS*) with its six colours; or the South African flag: gold, black (dirty), red, white (clean), green and blue. These six colours can be used to explain the message of the Bible.

Gold: There is only one true **God** (the King) and He loves us dearly

Black (dirty): But we all have **sinned** and cannot save ourselves

Red: Therefore, God sent His Son, **Jesus**, to save us

White (clean): All who **believe** in Jesus **may be certain** that they have been saved

Green: God's children must **grow** and become more and more like Jesus

Blue: Jesus is **coming again** to fetch His children

The **sequence** of the colours is important. The **red** page comes before the **clean** and **green** pages. You and I are saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:20-27) **first**. Then we may be certain that we are children of God and new people who have new identities (1 John 5:11-13 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-18a). Then comes the green page about spiritual growth and the new way God's children live in gratitude to Him (Ephesians 4:23 to the end of the book)! New people with a new identity can live new lives because Christ lives in them through His Spirit. But the world often finds this way of life strange and incomprehensible.

Many people make the mistake of swapping the colours of the Wordless Book around. They put the green page before the red and clean pages. They say you need to do many good deeds before you can be saved. You must keep performing or you will never be certain that you will go to heaven. You need to perform good deeds in order to work yourself up into heaven from earth. But you will never know if you have done enough good deeds and so you must hope for the best. Thus they turn the good news of the Gospel back into bad news by proclaiming a religion of good works (Romans 9:30 to 10:4)!



Answer the following questions before continuing:

- ✓ Are you certain that you have been saved?
- ✓ On what do you base your answer?

If you are still in doubt, get help and make sure. *I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation.* (2 Corinthians 6:2b). Do not ignore God's love. Do not keep living in fear and doubt. He wants to give you absolute certainty.

Agricultural transformation starts with the absolute certainty of agriculturalists that they have been saved, justified and made anew! Tomorrow we will talk about the new identity of God's children.

Prayer:

† Pray for the salvation of everyone who is part of the agricultural community: employers and employees, men, women and children. Pray that they will be certain of their salvation.

Day 2

Our new identity in Christ!

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:17-18a

When the Israelites stood before Goliath (1 Samuel 17), he intimidated them and their fear of him increased as the days wore on. They forgot that they belonged to God and that His power was available to them. However, David, smaller and younger than the rest, knew who he was (chosen, anointed and equipped to be king – 1 Samuel 16:13). He knew that, because of his identity, he could reckon on God's assistance (1 Samuel 17:37 and verses 45-48). When you are faced by serious challenges such as agricultural transformation and land reform, you must know who you are and what help is available to you. If not, fear will overwhelm you and disappointment paralyse you.

You were born from two people – your mother and your father. You are a person of flesh and blood. People of flesh and blood are all sinners because of Adam's disobedience (Romans 5:18-19).



They do not understand the things of the Spirit: They cannot do the will of God and always desire the opposite of what the Spirit wants (1 Corinthians 2:14-15 and Romans 8:5-8, and Galatians 5:16-17).

But children of God are new people with new identities. Not because of their changed way of life, but because they have been born again. The Word says this second birth is a birth from above, a birth of the Spirit, a birth of God (John 3:1-2 and John 1:12-13).

The Word teaches us: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God ...* (2 Corinthians 5:17-18a).

All who have been born from above, of God and of the Spirit, have a new identity:

- ✓ They are children of God (John 1:12)
- ✓ They are members of a new family, a new nation and a new kingdom – the family, nation and kingdom of God (Ephesians 2:19; Ephesians 1:11-14 and Philippians 3:20)
- ✓ Christ lives in them through His Spirit (Romans 8:10)
- ✓ They are living with Christ, safely hidden in God (Colossians 3:3)
- ✓ Because they are one with Christ, His righteousness and obedience has become theirs so that, in God's eyes, they are just as righteous and obedient as Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:30)
- ✓ All their sin has been forgiven, once and for all (Hebrews 10:14)
- ✓ Their relationship with God has been completely restored (Romans 5:1)
- ✓ They are completely free and there is nothing they can or need to do to gain God's love and favour (Hebrews 10:17-18)
- ✓ Nothing and no-one can accuse or condemn them. Christ destroyed the proof of guilt with all its claims against them, on the cross. Because the charges no longer exist, they have been declared innocent by God (Romans 8:1 & 8:31-34, and Colossians 2:13-14);
- ✓ They are holy – set aside for and dedicated to God (Romans 1:7);
- ✓ They already own eternal life and already have a place in heaven with Christ (Ephesians 2:6).



This is our true identity. We did not buy false identity documents to pretend that we are someone we are not. God, who cannot lie, gave us these new identity documents because of who we now are: New people because of our birth in and through Him.

People with these new identity documents are strangers to the world and, therefore, behave in a way that is strange and incomprehensible to people who do not have the Spirit of God (1 Peter 1:1 & 4:4). But because God's children see what the world cannot see, hear what the world cannot hear and believe what the world refuses to accept, they have answers and solutions for problems and challenges the world craves.

Accept your new identity and live according to it in the way David did in 1 Samuel 17:45 and on.

Prayer

† Pray that Christian agriculturalists will understand their new identity in Christ and will live according to it.

† Pray the following prayer for the following 40 days:

Lord, show me what I must see,
Teach me what I must know,
Tell me what I must do,
Make me what I must be – your Image.

As Christian agriculturalists we believe, based on the Word, that transformation starts at a personal level. Agriculturalists must be saved, redeemed and made anew by Christ. They must become aware of their new identity in Him and live according to it.



Day 3

Privileges of our new identity!

Read: Jeremiah 33:3 and James 1:5-8 & 3:13-18

God's children have many privileges. **Their new identity gives them access to places, information and support that others do not have.** It enables them to make a bit of heaven a reality on earth. What are these places, information and support?

Places:

- ✓ They have direct access to the throne of God (Hebrews 10:19-20);
- ✓ They already have a place in heaven (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1-3);

Information:

- ✓ The Holy Spirit knows God's deepest secrets and hidden things. He also lives in God's children and reveals to them what they should know and do (1 Corinthians 2:10-16; John 14:26 & 16:13; 1 John 2:27; Psalm 25:12-15);
- ✓ God's children see what is invisible, the bigger picture, and the true state of affairs. Therefore, they need not be confused and afraid (2 Kings 6:17; Daniel 2:24-26; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Hebrews 12:1-3 and all of the Revelation to John);
- ✓ God's children have wisdom directly from Above (James 3:13-18). They can end conflict, chaos and injustice. God teaches them to conquer evil with good (Romans 12:21);
- ✓ The strategy and plans of the enemy, the devil and the world, are revealed to God's children beforehand, and the weapons required to conquer evil are available to them (2 Corinthians 2:11 & 10:3-5);
- ✓ They know that they have not been called to survive but to conquer (Romans 8:37; Revelation 2:11, 17, 28, etc. & 12:11). They know what the final score is, no matter what the scoreboard says now. Jesus' enemies will vanish when He appears (2 Thessalonians 2:8; Romans 16:20);
- ✓ They need never feel hopeless, because God who needs no advisors, (Romans 11:33-36), is always ready to advise them (Jeremiah 33:3; Genesis 41:33-40).



Support:

- ✓ The Spirit of God who lives in His children is the same Spirit who equipped Christ for His ministry (Isaiah 11:2; Luke 3:21-22 & 4:1);
- ✓ God's children can do everything through Christ who gives them strength (Philippians 4:13). In fact, by the power of God who works in them He is able to do immeasurably more than all they ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20);
- ✓ They have extraordinary self-confidence because they know that all the power in heaven and earth belongs to Jesus and that He is with them every day and in all circumstances (Matthew 20:18-20). "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (1 John 4:4);
- ✓ There are millions of angels who are ready to help and serve God's children (Acts 12:6-10; Hebrews 1:13-14).

We have access to heaven, all the knowledge and wisdom of the Spirit, the power and support of Jesus Christ the Conqueror, and the help and protection of His angels. Unfortunately, many Christians do not make use of these privileges and constantly battle to make a difference in and to the world.

Answer the following question before continuing: Do you use the privileges you have because of your new identity to establish God's kingdom in agriculture?

Prayer:

† Pray that Christian agriculturalists will use the privilege of access to places and information and support that the world does not have, to realise Christ's kingship in agriculture and the agricultural community.



Day 4

Privileges bring responsibility!

Read: Matthew 6:9-10, and 6:33

The many privileges the Lord gives His children come with responsibility. We must use the free access to places, information and support that we have due to of our new identity, to transform agriculture. God's will must be done in agriculture as it is done in heaven. **Our testimony and the example we set must convince more and more agriculturalists that LIVING AND FARMING GOD'S WAY is the best, most workable and sustainable plan for agriculture.**

It is our responsibility to set our minds on the things above where Christ is (Colossians 3:1-3). We must think about heaven so that we will know how to live on earth. We must look about around us in heaven (we already have a place there with Christ) to see how everything works there. Then we will know how they are supposed to work here on earth.

It is our responsibility to ask if we do not know how to transform our pain into opportunities of growth; to ask when we do not know how to handle complex questions and issues such as land reform. Ignorance is not an excuse. God knows everything and He is more than willing to reveal His plans and solutions to us.

It is our responsibility to be a blessing to agriculture, to South Africa, Africa and the world. Abraham and his descendants were called to be a blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:2-3). We must produce enough nutritious, healthy and safe food in a sustainable and eco-friendly manner, so that people will be sure of having food on the table. We must serve the agricultural community with insights, answers and solutions to difficult questions and challenges. The Lord gladly gives His children these insights (Psalm 119:98-100).

By granting us all these privileges, God makes it possible for us to fulfil our calling and to let His kingdom come in agriculture. (We will discuss the Kingdom again on Day 16.) Our new identity and accompanying privileges enable us to



be good transformation agents for God. Let us LIVE AND FARM GOD'S WAY.

It is our responsibility to report for duty. We must be available for God's plan.

Prayer:

† Pray that Christian agriculturalists will use the privilege they have of access to places, information and support to establish God's kingdom in agriculture.

Day 5

Obey the Lord and King!

Read: Luke 1:38 & 6:46

The Bible is the Word of the King! But one of the biggest problems today is that people believe the Lord's Word is just a bunch of stories and suggestions which they can treat any way they like. The underlying reason for this false belief is the fact that Jesus is accepted as Saviour, but is not made King.

In Luke 6:46 Jesus says it makes no sense to call Him Lord without obeying Him. He is the Lord. He *must* be obeyed. The New Testament refers to Jesus as Lord more often than it refers to Him as Saviour. In Acts He is called *Saviour* twice, but *Lord* 92 times. The New Testament refers to Him as Saviour 24 times, but 747 times as Lord. (Information from the *One2One Personal Follow-up and Discipleship* by Steve Murrell, published by Every Nation). Jesus cannot be divided. He is Saviour *and* Lord! If He is not your Lord, He is not your Saviour. If He is your Saviour, He is also your Lord and King! Then He will guide you in the right way to the glory of His Name (Psalm 23:3b). Then you *must* obey Him in everything. Then you must be available for His plan. Then you must stop trying to build your own kingdom and exert yourself for the coming of His Kingdom.



Let us make it clear: It is not about our agricultural plan, but about God's plan! It is not about our identity as South Africans - Xhosa, Afrikaner, Zulu or anything else - but about our new identity in Christ. It is not about my personal interests or the interests of my ethnic group, but about what is in the best interest of God's kingdom – in agriculture. We do not have the right to treat His commands and instructions as recommendations or optional requests that may be ignored. They are the King's commands! What a pity it is when people consider His commands unfair (cf. Deuteronomy 4:8; Nehemiah 9:13; Matthew 25:24-30; 1 John 5:3-4).

Agricultural transformation starts when agriculturalists put aside their own plans and interests, their own likes and prejudices, and bow down to the King in complete submission. Agricultural transformation starts when agriculturalists have died with Christ and are dead to selfishness, self-interest, greed, extravagance, pride, bossiness, arrogance, conceit, racism, lovelessness, licentiousness and swearing. It begins when they rise from death with Christ to live for God and God alone (Romans 6:10-11).

Agricultural transformation starts when agriculturalists join Asaph in Psalm 73:25 singing, *Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides You.*

Prayer:

† Pray that agriculturalists will, like Mary in Luke 1:38 put themselves at God's disposal so that He may carry out His plan through them.

Day 6

God wants to restore relationships

Read: John 17:21-23 and Colossians 1:15-22

We often think all that Jesus came to do, was to reconcile people with God. But He reconciled more than people to God. He reconciled everything on earth and in heaven with God (Colossians 1:19-20), including the garden/agriculture (Revelation 22:1-5). God wants to *restore* all relationships that started out good. Let us begin at Genesis 1.



God created people to have an eternal relationship with Him and with each other. A relationship marked by love and unity. He created a beautiful garden and placed people inside it. The garden supplied the people with enough to eat without them needing to over-exert themselves. Like everything else He created, people's relationship with God, each other and with the garden, was very good. Exactly the way God wanted it to be.

This intimate relationship was destroyed by Adam and Eve's sin and disobedience. But that could not and did not end God's love for people. He still wants people to love Him and one another (Matthew 22:37-40). Therefore, He sent His Son so that all who believe in Him will be restored to the eternal and intimate relationship with Him and with one another (John 3:16 & 17:21-23; 1 John 4:7-21).

God's original purpose was **love and unity**. His purpose for the coming of Jesus was the restoration of the love and unity between Himself, people and creation. This is still the reason why He wants us to be His fellow workers – so that the love and unity between God, people and creation will be restored.

God cares for you! He cares for agriculturalists! He cares for agriculture! You can be certain that the purpose of all He asks of you will be to restore and build love and unity. You need not ever be afraid of putting yourself at His disposal.

Agricultural transformation occurs when you and I become God's fellow workers to restore and build relationships between God, people and creation.

Prayer:

† Pray that relationships will be restored and built between:

- ✓ The agricultural community and God;
- ✓ People in the agricultural community;
- ✓ Agriculturalists and creation.



Day 7

Your calling is to farm!

Read: Genesis 1:27-28; Isaiah 28:23-29 and Colossians 3:22 - 4:1

To the child of God, agricultural transformation is the process of changing everything in agriculture that is not in line with God's will to bring it in line with His Word. But this process is jeopardised by *wrong ideas* that many people, even Christians, have. For example, the idea that the world exists of two parts and that God is limited to the spiritual part. The idea that the Lord's work is limited to what happens in and around the church. The idea that God is less concerned about the state of agriculture than the state of the church. The idea many people have that God is more interested in saving souls than in food for the empty stomachs of hungry people. The idea that farmers must leave agriculture if they want to work for the Lord full-time. And so we can continue. As long as we cling to these false ideas, we will battle to change agriculture into a business in which everyone LIVES AND FARMS GOD'S WAY.

The truth is: The Lord calls farmers to farm in the same way teachers are called to teach, and elders to serve congregations. The calling of agriculturalists is unique. It is different to that of ministers and pastors, but it certainly is not less holy or less important. It is just the same a calling to build the kingdom of God (see Day 16). It is also a full-time ministry, all day, every day of the week! Only the place differs. Farmers minister on their farms and in agriculture. A beautiful field of maize proclaims the glory and the goodness of the Lord, just as much as a singing congregation does. The restoration of a parched piece of land testifies to God's grace the same as healing of the sick does. The sustainable production of sufficient, good-looking, safe and nutritious food in an eco-friendly manner definitely results in God being thanked and praised. This is our calling. We must see to it that people thank God for enough food and clothes, that nature does not lose its ability to praise God because of what we do and the way we farm. If we succeed in this, we will be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us.



Prayer:

† Pray that agriculturalists will realise their business is a calling from God and will strive towards LIVING AND FARMING GOD'S WAY.

Day 8

Farming is an opportunity for ministry!

Read: Jeremiah 29:11 and James 2:14-17

Marketplace ministry is today as relevant as ministry in the church. The market place is where people work, and, earn their daily living. Your ministry in the market place is therefore a ministry on the farm and in your agricultural community. Through your ministry in the market place, you can reach people and help them in ways that the minister/pastor can not. Let us illustrate this by means of a true story. People's names have been changed, but I have chosen other appropriate names.

Victor is 19, but has been addicted to alcohol and drugs since the age of nine. He had a terrible name in the community, except amongst those who followed or abused him. Before he was expelled from school years earlier, his mother, Gloria, was called into school every week because of some problem Victor had caused. Dagga, drugs, alcohol! He was a smuggler and adult men used him to do all their dirty work. Theft, assault, rape and murder were all things he was suspected of being involved in or of which he was accused. This minor's name appears in many court records. Everyone knew Victor. He was bad news.

In October 2009, Passion, a farmer's wife from the area, was confronted by the destructive effects of drugs on children – children like Victor. She listened closely to the cry for help from Gloria, Victor's mother. A holy anger burned in her. *We will not accept it. In the Name of Jesus, we are going to stand up and fight for our children. Today we are declaring war against this evil,* Passion and Gloria decided. Gloria and a few other women committed themselves to praying for Victor and against all these evil things.



Other people in the district were asked to pray with them. They wanted to send Victor to *Toevlug* in Worcester for rehabilitation. But it did not happen.

A few kilometres from the town there was an old church without doors and windows. Multi-racial, ecumenical prayer meetings were held there every week. Early one morning, those who had gathered to pray, started calling out Victor's name to the Lord. They were desperate and only the Lord could help them. A farmer instructed one of the group to write Victor's name in large letters on one of the walls of the church so that they would remember to pray for him every week. Then things started happening. Victor went to *Toevlug* for treatment. Five weeks later, he returned without alcohol and drugs, but also without work or good friends. He found a temporary job, but stayed in the same community with all the temptations and old friends. Victor sometimes got up to his old tricks, but he remained more or less on track.

The Lord heard the prayers for Victor and started to work in him. One day he asked Passion if he could join her at the prayer meeting at the old church. The people there testified about the way they had prayed for him. They encouraged him and he saw his name written against the wall. That was when Victor decided to accept the Lord.

The next Friday, Victor's temporary job ended. On Monday, he would be idle and we all know that the devil finds work for idle hands. That is exactly what happened: the devil attacked the young convert. Gloria was desperate. She was willing to do anything to save her child. She and Passion stood before the Lord once more. What now? **The honour of the Lord was at stake. A weak, newborn child of the Lord was in danger.** Churches could not do much, because churches do not provide jobs. Churches are in the community, therefore, they cannot move people like Victor whose spiritual well-being is at risk, out of the community temporarily until they are well and strong.

The people on Passion's farm also prayed for Victor. Passion suddenly realised that they should be willing to become God's fellow workers in answer to their own prayers.

Their farm, Vergelegen, was very far from town, almost 90km. It is an alcohol and drug free farm. It is a farm and, therefore, there are jobs. Passion discussed the issue with her husband and the other employees on the farm.



Together they decided to create a job to help Victor. They took a step in faith, a step of obedience. Now, months later, things are looking up. Victor is happy, growing spiritually and the other workers are teaching him many new skills.

During the Easter weekend (2010), the people of Vergelegen sat around the fire thinking about what Jesus had done for them. Together they celebrated Holy Communion. Someone wrote Bible verses on cards and put them in a canister. Everyone could draw a card. Jeremiah 29:11 was written on Victor's card: *'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'*

Many Christians take this text as their own. But God has plans to prosper and give hope and a future to those who are still *bad news* too. He wants to use you and your farming business for it. Perhaps you could do much more than the people of Vergelegen achieved.

Ask the Lord to help you to start a ministry in and through your farming business. Not only a spiritual ministry, but also a broader ministry that offers people without hope a future. A ministry in line with Isaiah 58, Jeremiah 29:11 and James 2:14-17.

Prayer:

† Pray that every Christian agriculturalist will recognise and use the opportunities for ministry in their farming business. Pray for Victor and everyone else the Lord wants to give a future and an expectation – through you and your farming business!



Day 9

Love unlimited!

Read: John 3:16 & 13:1, and 1 John 3:16

Things went very well for Victor for a while after he began working on the farm. About six months after he had stopped drinking, Victor went to town with the other employees. That morning he witnessed to a boy about the choice he had made and about his new life. But that afternoon the devil attacked him mercilessly. Everyone had finished their business in town and was ready to leave, but Victor was missing. He had disappeared without a trace. Old friends who found him in the street and all the associations with things from his past, confused him. The red car that visited him so often in the past, put in an unexpected appearance.

The people from the farm started looking for him in the bush around the town. Passion and Gloria hurried to the township. Everyone searched, questioned people and prayed!

Then they saw him running in the direction of his grandmother's house. When he stopped in front of the house, Passion and Gloria hurried to him. Victor grabbed hold of the fence around the house. Soon people in the street surrounded Passion, Gloria and Victor. The community knew Victor. He was bad news. *Phone the cops! Put him in the police van! You must be beaten! You are bad! Are you causing trouble again? You will never change!* This was what people who were just as bad shouted at him. Judging Victor made them feel better about themselves (Cf. John 8:1-11). Filled with fear, Victor tightened his grip on the fence. He was hysterical. He did not want to go back to the farm, but his mother and Passion's love was too great to leave him at the mercy of the mob.

With the conviction of the Holy Spirit, Passion walked up to Victor and hugged him to her chest. *If nothing else works, love will! Love, love without boundaries, will change this child and this community,* she thought. Meanwhile, a member of the community police forum arrived. Someone had called him.



The next thing, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Passion found herself preaching on the street. The crowd had dramatically increased in size. On that Friday afternoon, quite unexpectedly, they heard and saw the message of God's limitless love. With her arms around Victor, she called to the people to calm down. *Stop it! "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord almighty. ... (Zechariah 4:6b). Jesus!,* she called out loudly for help. *Not by power nor violence, but by your Spirit the change will come!* She held Victor closer as he trembled in fear and grief. His mother, Gloria, also threw her arms around him. She was the first to respond to the message. A flood of prayers flowed from Gloria's soul. She begged for mercy for her child. She begged that God's Spirit would bring about change. Then Passion continued with her message: *God loves him! His love will change him, not your shouting and threats. The Lord will complete the good work He started in Victor (Philippians 1:6). He wants to, He can, and He will! God loves him! His love and our love will change Victor!*

Moments later the crowd quietened down and Victor calmed down. He let go of the fence and got into the truck. He sat in the front between his mother and Passion. They bought some *braaivleis* from a street vendor, picked up the rest of the employees and drove back to Vergelegen. After about 20km Victor, his old self again, said, *What a lovely chop that was. Just think, I nearly missed it.*

The dirty mark on Passion's white jersey where Victor's tears fell echoed the message: *When all else fails, love will do the trick! Love, unlimited love will change this child and this community. Violence and power will not do it!*

Love triumphed! Love will triumph! *"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."* (John 13:35).

The seed of transformation is locked up in love. Where and when we sow unlimited love, we will harvest transformation and see enduring change.

Prayer:

† Pray that the agricultural community will get to know the full scope of the Love of God (how wide and long and high and deep it is according to Ephesians 3:18) and that this love will motivate them to love others without limit.



Day 10

Real transformation!

Read: Matthew 22:37-40 and 1 John 4:7-12

Real transformation is this: When relationships are not in the first place determined by outward things such as skin colour; not by economical factors such as money and possessions; not by social standing such as employer and employee; not by learnedness or illiteracy; not by political prejudice or differences in policy; not by church structures, creeds, and styles of worship; not by questions such as *where do you live?* Or *what car do you drive?* When all our relationships are determined by love, God has achieved His goal in us and transformation has occurred (1 John 4:12).

The question for Christian politicians is not ***what are you doing*** for agriculturalists, but ***how much do you love*** agriculturalists? The question for Christian agriculturalist is not in the first place ***how are you helping*** government, but ***how much do you love*** those in government? The question to employers is not ***what are you doing*** for your personnel, but ***how much do you love*** them? The question to all agriculturalists (subsistence farmers, small scale and large-scale commercial farmers) is not ***what are you doing*** for each other, but ***how much do you love*** each other? You see, it is the attitude of your heart that determines your behaviour. If your heart is filled with love, your eyes will see with love, your ears will listen with love, your mouth will speak love and your hands will minister love - , and your feet will walk the distance of love.

The Bible offers no escape. 1 Corinthians 13:3 says that you can give all you own away and even surrender your body, but if you don't have love, it is all in vain! **You can, therefore, give without loving, but you cannot love without giving** (1 John 3:16-18).

God's will is done 100% in heaven. Similarly, His will must be done on your farm and mine. He who takes a quick glance at heaven will see LOVE because God is love (1 John 4:8). Love is the will of God and it is done 100% in heaven. Therefore, it is His will for us to love on earth as it is in heaven.

The love needed for agricultural transformation is not found in people. On our own we can only love selfishly. Even our plans for transformation will be



selfish. God must pour out His love in us through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). Only then will we be able to love our friends and our enemies (Matthew 5:44 & 7:12), our own people and others (Leviticus 19:33-34)!

Our motivation for agricultural transformation, therefore, is neither money nor profit. It is not fear of the future. It is not the agenda of government or other interested parties. The status quo becomes unacceptable to us when we love others as we love ourselves. The love of God makes us want to change the situation. Agricultural transformation is not something that *must* happen. It is something that *will* happen if and when God's love achieves its goal in all of us.

Prayer:

† Pray that all the relationships in agriculture will be determined by **love** and nothing else. Pray it specifically for the relationship between agriculturalists and government.



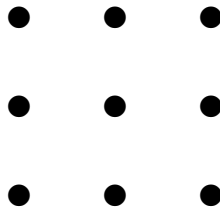
PART 2

LAND REFORM: REQUIREMENTS FOR OUR SEARCH FOR ANSWERS

Day 11 Think anew!

Read: Isaiah 55:6-11 and Jeremiah 29:11-13

Without lifting your hand and without crossing the same line twice, **draw four straight lines through all nine dots.**



(The solution is found just before Day 22. Do not give up trying to find the answer yourself too quickly.)

God has a plan. But His plan usually falls **outside** our *normal* way of thinking and doing. Therefore, we must pray and ask Him to reveal to us what He wants to do. (Jeremiah 33:3). Even then we battle to accept His plan because it often seems nonsensical to us; something that cannot work. Obedience to, and joining in with God's plan requires faith (Hebrews 11:6). True faith! Faith that everything is possible for God (Jeremiah 32:17 & 27)! His power, capability and resources are unlimited. He does not depend on wealth, the strength or wisdom of people. His instruments are often weak and insignificant. The people He uses often have no education, social standing or influence. They are ordinary people like you and me. It is only when He starts using them that the world is stunned and amazed.



The key to solving the national crisis about agricultural land successfully lies in obeying God. There is no one plan that will work everywhere and for everyone. Farmers, congregations, farmer's unions and study groups at grass roots level need to hear from the Lord what He wants them to do in their area and in their circumstances.

Prayer:

† Pray that the Lord will grant all His children who are involved in solving difficult agricultural issues such as land reform, the ability to think creatively and to think anew.

As Christian agriculturalists, we believe that there is no one super land reform plan that will work everywhere and for everyone. Our God, the God of the Bible, is more creative and practical than that. There must be a variety of plans.

Day 12

Take the problem to the Lord

Read: Numbers 27:1-11 and Numbers 26:33 & 36:10-13

There were clear prescriptions regarding land ownership and the inheritance of land in Israel. Then something happened that the normal procedure and *legislation* in Israel did not provide for. Zelophehad had five daughters and no sons when he died. There are four important things in this story that we must recognise:

Firstly, the story teaches us that new, extraordinary situations may arise for which our old solutions will no longer be appropriate. New guidelines are required. In practice that does not mean that the Bible is unable to help us solve the current land question. It merely means that we need to take a new look and listen at what the Word says. We so often stick to the well-known parts; the parts we like and that allow us to remain in our comfort zones.



Secondly, it is clear that Zelophehad did not get what he deserved. The fact that he did not have sons to inherit his land was not because he rebelled against the Lord (Numbers 27:3). He died in the desert like all the other Israelites of his age. Beware of blaming others for the current land problem and saying it is what they deserve.

Thirdly, and this may be the most important lesson, is what Moses did. He did not try thinking of a solution or coming up with a *quick fix*. He did not even call a meeting of all the wise men to debate the issue. ***So Moses brought their case before the Lord and the Lord said to him, ...*** (verse 5-6a). Moses asked the Lord to help and advise him. ***Land reform is a difficult and complex issue with many different facets. Christians must pray to the Lord and ask Him for solutions and answers.*** We dare not depend on our own insights.

Lastly, we read that according to the new arrangement, Zelophehad's daughters received the land that was due to them, and they did what the Lord commanded Moses (Numbers 36:10). In obedience to the Lord, they were willing to become part of His answer and solution.

Every Christian agriculturalist must, in the interest of the Kingdom and in national interest, become involved in land reform. As a Christian, it is your first and most important responsibility to pray to God for answers and solutions to this complex issue. Furthermore, you must be willing to obediently become part of His answer and His solution. Like Mary, Jesus' mother in Luke 1:38, you must make yourself available to the Lord and carry out His plan.

Prayer:

† Ask the Lord that agriculturalists and citizens of the country (they all eat!) will increasingly pray about land reform and ask Him for His advice and blessing on this problem



Day 13

Pray about Land Reform

Read: Philippians 4:6-7

Land reform is not an unsurmountable problem, because Christians know that everything is always possible for God (Jeremiah 32:17 & 27 – this chapter is about buying and owning land). The problem also is not that we do not know what to do. The problem is that we do not consult the One who does know. The greatest problem is the unwillingness of the majority of agriculturalists (and citizens) to enter into discussion with God about land reform – specifically and purposefully. There are a few possible reasons for this unwillingness:

- They think that God is only interested in the *church*, and not in *agriculture* too;
- They are under the impression that the national crisis will disappear of its own accord;
- They are overwhelmed by all the failures and believe it is their Christian duty to criticise and condemn. (They don't need any faith for that!)
- They believe that God is powerless because of the many failures;
- They feel that they have nothing to contribute and hope that the agricultural leaders and government will work things out to their benefit;
- They are convinced that the status quo is the will of the Lord and that change is unnecessary;
- They have already decided to get out of agriculture (to flee) - with the greatest profit, of course.

Not one of the above reasons should apply to you as a responsible Christian. If it does, confess it and start praying with focus and purpose for meaningful land reform.

There is a wonderful command and promise in Philippians 4:6-7. God commands worried people to pray and He promises that, when they do, He will grant them His peace - a peace that surpasses all understanding. Therefore, if you lie awake and keep voicing your fears and worries about land reform, it is probably because you are not really praying about the issue.



When you do pray, you must also be willing to get involved and become part of God's answer. Do not get frightened and stop praying. One of the most wonderful attributes of God is that He always makes it possible for people to carry out His commands.

Prayer:

- † Pray and ask that agriculturalists will accept God's invitation to make their worries about land reform and all the related problems known to Him through prayer and petition and thanksgiving.
- † Pray that agriculturalists will experience the peace that surpasses all understanding when they sincerely pray about land reform.
- † Pray that agriculturalists will believe that GOD CAN! God can do everything He wants to do!

Day 14

Hear God's voice!

Read: Jeremiah 33:3 and Amos 3:7 (Amos repeatedly says, *This is what the Lord says, ...*)

In our relationship with God, it is exceedingly important that we hear His voice. If you are battling to hear God's voice you must take trouble to fix the problem. The Lord is more than a moral God who gives us general guidelines about right and wrong. He is a personal God who talks to His children and gives them practice guidance and advice for specific situations such as agricultural transformation and land reform. He makes His will and plans known to His children.

The Lord usually talks to us through His Word and His Spirit. But He also talks through fellow believers, dreams, visions, signs and wonders. He can talk through circumstances, nature, prophets and angels. He can also speak to us directly, out loud. There are examples of all of these in the Bible. God Himself decides how He wants to communicate with His children.

What is important is that we must believe that He wants to communicate with us and that we should develop the ability to discern when He is talking to us. God's instructions and commands often are illogical (they do not make sense



to people who do not have the Spirit of God) and impossible to carry out in our own strength. But His commands never negate to His Word.

There are various ways of finding out whether it is the Lord who is talking to us. Often it is a conviction that the Holy Spirit puts in your heart when you pray about a particular matter. It may also be a new, creative idea you get when you are fasting and praying. Or it may be the soft voice of the Holy Spirit in you when a text suddenly gets new meaning for you when you read it for the umpteenth time. It is as though you are reading it for the first time and clearly feel that God is telling you through it what to do. The Lord's voice often connects your circumstances and the Word and you suddenly understand how a particular section applies to you in your particular circumstances. The Lord's voice warns you when you are on the wrong path, but also shows you the right path (Isaiah 30:21).

Prayer:

† Pray that agriculturalists will increasingly desire and develop the ability to hear God's voice, and that they will obey Him.

As Christian agriculturalists, we believe that we must pray about land reform until we hear what God is telling us to do. Then we must obey Him. Locally, groups can pray together to find out what they should do as a group.

Day 15
Make yourself available to God

Read: Isaiah 6:8 and Luke 1:38, and Ephesians 5:15-17

People often think that the Lord always calls specific people to do specific things. This is true, but sometimes His calling is an open invitation. This was the case with Isaiah. Isaiah responds to the Lord's question, "*Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?*" He makes himself available to the Lord even before he knows exactly what the Lord wants him to do.



Mary, Jesus' mother, also made herself available to the Lord before she knew exactly what it would mean.

God expects you as His child to come forward in times of national crises and to make yourself available to him by praying: *Lord, what do you want me to do? What can I do to help carry out your plan so that your will be done here on earth as it is in heaven?* In 2003, before I had any inkling of what the Lord wanted to do, I prayed, *Lord, whatever it is you want to do about land reform, I am available to you. Use me as you please.* Believe me, it is not easy, but we do not have a choice, my friend. If we call ourselves Christians and proclaim God as our King, we must allow Him to use us as He pleases. God is not perplexed by land reform. Instead He is looking for people to listen to His plans and to go and do what He tells them to do. You need not do anything He does not tell you to, but you must enter into an intense discussion with Him about land reform, or better still, about farreaching transformation in agriculture.

Prayer:

† Pray that all Christians, especially agriculturalists, will be available to the Lord. Pray Romans 12:1-2 for them.

As Christian agriculturalists, we believe that God works through people. We as Christian agriculturalists, every one of us, must make ourselves available to the Lord so that He can carry out His plans regarding agricultural transformation and land reform through us. Every Christian agriculturalist must become involved in one way or another.



Day 16

Seek first the Kingdom!

Read: Matthew 6:9-10 and 6:33

The Kingdom of God is probably the most central theme of the New Testament. It made up the content of Jesus' and the apostles' preaching (Matthew 4:17 and Acts 28:23-31).

Jesus commands us to pray for the coming of the Kingdom and to exert ourselves for it before doing anything else. It is important to understand what the term *Kingdom of God* means. This knowledge will help us to know what we must do in agriculture and in agricultural transformation and land reform in order to seek the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is mainly concerned with the following five important matters:

1. It is about **GOD HIMSELF. HE IS THE KING.**
 - ✓ He must receive honour and praise by the way we farm, own land and provide food security to the people.
 - ✓ He must be recognised as the real owner of our land (yes, all land). Christ must be worshipped as the One who has reconciled everything (including our land) with God; the One who has all the power, authority and say over agriculture and our land (Ephesians 1:19b-23; Colossians 1:15-20).
2. It is about the **WILL OF THE KING.** Because He is Lord and King, He must be obeyed.
 - ✓ We must obey Him in all our farming practices and decisions. That includes agricultural transformation and land reform.
 - ✓ We must proclaim God's will in and for agriculture.
 - ✓ Justice is an outstanding feature of God and His reign. Therefore, justice must prevail in land reform (2 Chronicles 19:7; Isaiah 11:1-5; Jeremiah 9:24; Isaiah 56:1).
3. It is about the **KING'S VICTORY OVER EVIL** and all chaos and destructive powers.
 - ✓ Our farming business and the way we handle land reform must make it clear that Jesus has conquered the idol of greed (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5) and our devotion to earthly possessions, and also our



selfishness, discontentment, wilfulness and unwillingness to really listen to each other.

- ✓ We may not allow the way we handle land reform to dump agriculture and the country into chaos and misery. That is what the devil wants.

4. It is about the **RESTORATION** that occurs when the will of the King is done. The restoration of our relationship with Him becomes visible when our deeds lead to the restoration of all our other relationships:

- ✓ Where people have been unjustly treated, justice must be restored (Jeremiah 9:24; Amos 5:24);
- ✓ Where land rights have been violated they must be restored;
- ✓ The relationship between people who could not or would not farm together must be restored;
- ✓ Human dignity must be restored by helping people to find their new identity in Christ through training, granting them the right to land, helping them become self-sufficient, etcetera.

5. It is about the **PROMISE AND EXPECTATION OF THE RETURN OF THE KING.**

- ✓ We must remember that we will one day have to report to the King about everything, including our attitudes and the way we handled agricultural transformation and land reform.
- ✓ This demands that we remain patient throughout the process, which may be painful at times, and that we will not keep complaining about each other (James 5:7-11).

Prayer:

- † Pray for the coming of God's Kingdom, especially in agriculture. Pray that agriculturalists will seek the Kingdom of God first - in all the planning they do and decisions they make.

A; Christian agriculturalists, we believe that Christians should consciously strive towards the coming of God's Kingdom in agriculture and the land reform process.



Day 17

The right to land is important to God

Read: Psalm 37:22 (Read the whole Psalm)

The protection and restoration of land rights cannot be considered unimportant. Only if the Old Testament as the Word of God is rejected, can the church and Christians delete the discussion on land from their agenda and concern themselves only with so-called *spiritual* issues.

The term, *Kingdom of God* and *Kingdom of Heaven* are used frequently in the New Testament. But the issue is also raised in the Old Testament. It is about **God's reign as King**, over all people and all of creation, but especially about His reign over Israel. Therefore, the Old Testament gives us a good idea of the King's will regarding land ownership and land rights:

- Of foremost importance is that all land belongs to Him and no one has a permanent claim to land (Cf. Leviticus 25:23-24; Psalm 89:12; Acts 17:26). We are merely stewards of that which God has entrusted to us for a certain period of time;
- Secondly, it is clearly not His will for land to end up in the hands of a few individuals or a specific group. (cf. Isaiah 5:8-10; Ezekiel 45:1-12, 46:16-18 & 47:21-23);
- Thirdly, God also grants land to the heathen (cf. Psalm 60:8-10; Acts 17:26; Matthew 5:45). Israel is warned not to come to the wrong conclusions because of their history. Because of the miracles God did in the past, they were convinced that they were always right with God and that He would always be on their side – no matter what they did. The fact that He drove people off their land and gave it to the Israelites was the main reason they jumped to the wrong conclusion (Amos 9, especially verse 7).
- Fourthly, it is clear that God's will is for land rights to be protected and restored, no matter why they were lost:
 - ❖ **The turn of events** or the **customs of a particular period:** The daughters of Zelophehad lost their land because their father didn't have sons and the law stated that daughters could not inherit land (Numbers 27:1-11);



- ❖ **Natural causes:** The woman lost her land because she went to live in another country because of a seven year drought and famine in her own country (2 Kings 8:1-6);
- ❖ **Debt:** All who lost their land due to debt, no matter why, had to receive their land back during the Year of the Jubilee so that they could make a fresh start (Leviticus 25:8-13);
- ❖ **Exploitation:** Some of the people, who returned from exile were in dire straits because they were exploited by their rich fellow citizens. They lost their fields, vineyards, olive orchards and homes. They were economically paralysed. This was totally unacceptable and did not honour God (Nehemiah 5:9). Nehemiah took drastic steps to put things right. The Lord would see to it that those who kept exploiting others would lose all their possessions (Nehemiah 5:1-13).
- ❖ **Political dominance and the punishment of sin:** Israel was taken into exile. They lost their land to the Chaldeans because they would not listen to the Lord. In Jeremiah 32, God undertakes to change their hearts and their future and to re-establish them in their land. *I will rejoice in doing good to them and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.* (Jeremiah 32:41). Also read Amos 9:13-15.

The possession and loss of land was not a trivial matter to the Lord. He took account of the fact that, because of the economy of the time, owning or losing land determined people's ability to be self-sufficient or not. Land ownership was considered a blessing from the Lord.

Prayer:

† Pray that land rights will be upheld, protected and restored. Pray for the wisdom to do it in ways that will benefit everyone. In other words, pray for win-win solutions that will benefit everyone and will honour the Lord.

As Christian agriculturalists, we believe that the right to land is important to God – both the protection and restoration of these rights



Day 18

Land Reform

Keep God and the devil in mind

Read: 2 Peter 1:3 and 2 Corinthians 2:11

People sometimes say that they believe in God and that the devil exists, but they take neither God nor the devil into consideration in their daily lives. They talk and debate about things such as land reform as though neither God nor the devil exists. This is a typical humanistic and secular approach. For the humanists it is only about people. But we as Christians must consider God, the devil and people's involvement in the land issue.

Land reform is an emotional and painful matter. The pain however, differs from group to group and from person to person. Therefore, it is essential for Christians to consider what God says about suffering and hardship in His Word.



Behind our suffering is **NOT** God **OR** Satan **OR** people, but God **AND** Satan **AND** people. Each is involved **ACCORDING TO HIS OWN NATURE AND CHARACTER!** Beware of considering God and Satan's involvement in agricultur and the land problem as irrelevant or dismissing it altogether in a typically humanistic way.

According to God's nature and character (as revealed to us in Scripture), He is involved in the pain and suffering people on both sides experience because of land reform. God's involvement does not make Him cruel, unfair



or hateful. In His involvement, He remains the holy, just, merciful and loving God who cares for people, even in their suffering and hardship. (Read Psalm 119:67, 71 & 75.) The Bible is full of examples of the suffering and hardship God sends in order to restore justice and to call people to repent. (Consider the prophecy of Amos – read chapters 4 & 5.)

Satan is also involved according to his nature and character. He is the father of the lie, a murderer since the beginning (John 8:44). He tempts people because he wants them to sin against God in their suffering. He is not satisfied with people suffering – He wants to destroy their lives. As a liar, he offers all kinds of false and wrong solutions to their problems. But his solutions just compound the problem. Therefore, be very careful of all kinds of wrong and false solutions that he offers for the problem of land reform. If we listen to him, we will end up in chaos. As an accuser, he likes enticing people into blaming others for everything that goes wrong. Do not become his partner by doing so.

People (all the role players in the land reform process) ***are also involved according to either their old nature*** (characterised by greed, selfishness, jealousy, envy, mistrust, accusations, etcetera), ***or as new people under the guidance of the Holy Spirit*** (Cf Galatians 5:22-26; James 3:13-18).

Prayer:

† Pray that agriculturalists will keep in mind that God and Satan and people are involved in suffering and hardship when they are battling with problems. Ask that they will remember that each is involved according to his own character and nature. Therefore, they should keep trusting God and beware of the devil's traps.



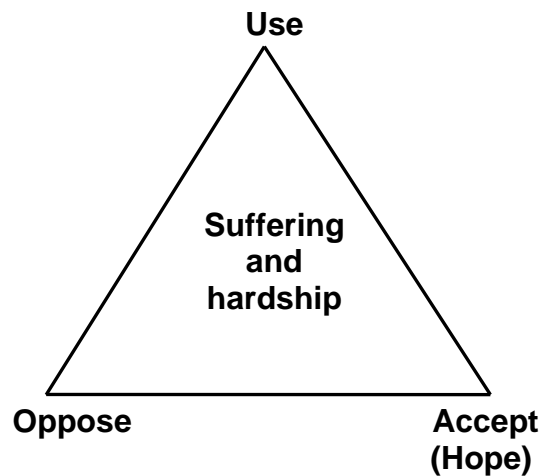
Day 19

Land Reform

Respond to the problem in a biblical manner

Read: Psalm 119:67, 71 & 75, and Romans 8:28

The question is: ***How should a Christian respond to suffering?*** What should you do when you are suffering? The Bible does not provide a single answer. The answer is a complex one, comprising three different perspectives.



You **SHOULD NOT CHOOSE** to either use OR fight OR accept your suffering. You should always **SIMULTANEOUSLY** use AND fight AND accept all suffering. Where land reform is concerned, you can **use** your pain by depending on God in prayer and turning it into an opportunity for growth. God promised to make all things work together for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28). You could learn to farm more effectively on less land. You could learn to cultivate a greater obedience to the Father (Psalm 119:71). You could learn to think in a new, more creative way and to accept new challenges. You could get to know God's caring in a new way. You could learn to examine all your relationships closely and to put right that which is wrong. The opportunities for growth in each instance of pain are unlimited.

Because of the involvement of the devil and sinful people in suffering and hardship, that which is sinful and unacceptable in the land reform process should be **opposed** by means of the power of the resurrection of Christ. For example, all attempts to fix one instance of injustice with more injustice must be opposed. There must be an ongoing fight against all forms of greed, the abuse of power, exploitation and all forms of corruption. Solutions that could



result in famine and bloodshed must be turned down. There should be no room for revenge (Romans 12:19-21).

At the same time, Christians can keep **hoping** even while they are suffering. Suffering and hardship will eventually only end when Christ returns. Only then will those who are thrown into the deepest darkness, suffer hellish agony. Therefore, we should remain patient in our suffering. We must keep on hoping. Whether we get or lose land is not of eternal importance. We *know* that we will inherit the new heaven and the new earth (Hebrews 10:32-36, especially verse 34).

The **use and acceptance** of suffering **prevents** our fight against it from **degenerating into bitterness and revenge**. Similarly, the **use and acceptance** of suffering **prevents** our acceptance from **degenerating into passiveness** (not doing anything about it).

In practice, many whites say the status quo should be accepted. They believe the situation need not change because farmers are producing enough food. They do not understand the suffering of others, nor do they have other's interests at heart. They beg for acceptance at the cost of fighting. On the other hand, previously disadvantaged people emphasise the fight against the present system without always making allowance for hope, patience and acceptance.

Where agricultural land is concerned, that which is positive in the present situation should be accepted from a biblical perspective. However, at the same time, that which is negative must be opposed. This demands purposeful, but controlled and well-managed change over a period of time.

Prayer:

† Pray that agriculturalists will simultaneously use, fight and accept their suffering and hardship. Pray that this will be applied properly in the land reform process.

A; Christian agriculturalists, we believe that the role and involvement of God and Satan and people should always be kept in mind when looking for answers to the question of land. The problem should be used, fought and accepted simultaneously, and one-sided responses should be turned down.



Day 20

Act properly, be fair

Read: Isaiah 11:2-5 and Jeremiah 9:23-24, and Micah 6:8

I still remember the simple but very fair way in which older people divided a love one's possessions after death: The eldest divided everything and put them in heaps. Then the youngest chose first. This ensured that the eldest shared everything fairly. Perhaps that was the mistake of Apartheid – those who did the dividing chose first and so the land was not divided fairly. [A previous study that was published in 2003 refers to the various laws and how the land was divided according to these laws. The study is available on Amos' website.]

It is not really difficult to determine what is right or fair. We all have a feel for it. We feel it immediately when people treat us unfairly – because they do not understand our side of the matter, do not consider our circumstances, cannot or will not put themselves in our shoes, or do not take our interests into consideration.

I am not talking about selfish, self-willed people who always think everyone owes them. I am not talking about childish people who are only concerned about their own rights and are never willing to accept the responsibilities that go with these rights. I am talking about those of us who call ourselves objective. The Spirit of God lives in us, the same Spirit that Christ received. Read Isaiah 11:2-5 and John 3:34 again. In us, this Spirit testifies about what is right and just. All we need to do, is listen!

We must be fair to rich and poor alike. We may not favour the poor because they are poor or wrong them because they cannot stand up for themselves (cf. Exodus 23:3 & 6).

We as Christians should display Christ's sense of fairness and justness, because we have His Spirit! We are able to make a special contribution towards ensuring that justice is done to all in the land reform process.



In Matthew 7:12, Jesus gives another simple guideline for treating other people fairly and justly: *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."*

Prayer:

† Pray that Christians will let justice be done in the land reform process. Pray that the nature and attributes of God as described in 2 Chronicles 19:7b will be revealed in all His children who are involved in the land reform process.



PART 3

APPLYING GOD'S WAY PRINCIPLES TO AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND THE LAND REFORM PROCESS

Five things characterise the manner in which God works - *God's Way*. This is discussed in full in the booklet, *Living and Farming God's Way: Basics*, published by AMOS in 2008.

- It is so radically different that it seems like nonsense
- God works through people
- Unity and co-operation
- Open hands
- Serving

Looking at how God works helps us to know how He wants us to operate. When we obediently apply these five *God's Way* principles, miracles almost always happen, no matter where or to what we apply them. Let us take a look at land reform in the light of the above five characteristics.

There is a short DVD on *AMOS'* website (www.amosafrica.net). Please download and watch it. It is about a group of Ficksburg farmers and their employees who fixed 18 km of tarred road at their own expense. Discuss the DVD and try to identify the five principles of *living and farming God's way* in it.

Day 21

Radically different

(*God's Way* principle: It is so radically different that it seems like nonsense)

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

What must I do to expand my flock? The *logical* thing: Buy good, performance tested rams and put them with my best and most fertile ewes. What does the Lord do when He wants to build a large nation? He does something that is **radically different**. He chooses a doubly infertile woman



and a very, very old man. Sarah had always been infertile. There was no chance of her having a child at the age of ninety by a man who was already a hundred years old (Genesis 17:17) Even fertile women do not have children at the age of ninety! If you tell a similar tale to someone today, they will laugh at you and say, *Nonsense! That is rubbish! It is impossible!* That was Abraham and Sarah's first response too (Genesis 17:17 & 18:12). But that is how God works. He does not think and do the way we think and do (Isaiah 55:8).

The Bible is full of strange but true stories that teach us about God and His way of doing things. Think of all the humanly impossible instructions God gave and made possible. Think of all the signs and inexplicable miracles. Especially think about the way God made salvation possible for us: the virgin birth, the crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus does not make sense to the world. It is complete nonsense to the world (1 Corinthians 1:18-32)!

If God's ways did not always made sense in the past, then what He is doing today certainly will not make sense to everyone either. If God's instructions seemed impossible in those days, 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 in those days, 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!

Chances are that God will, in answer to your prayers about land reform, tell you things that will not make sense to you. He may give you instructions that are humanly impossible. Do not be frightened when this happens. God always makes it possible for you to carry out His instructions. When you obey Him, He is ready and willing to perform many miracles for you. The documentary DVD, ***Promise of the Veld***, that is available from AMOS, illustrates these truths perfectly.

We cannot just keep doing what seems logical and understandable. If we do, we will never find new answers and lasting solutions. We will keep doing things the old, familiar way and keep getting the same unsatisfactory results. It is important that we start daring to do the impossible. That we start doing something even if we do not have all the answers.

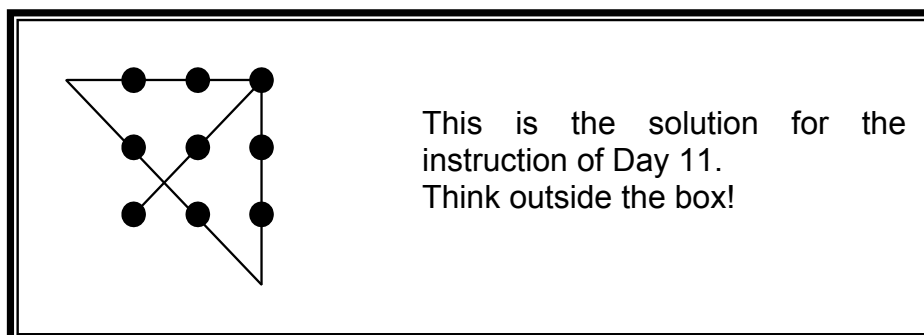


This will help us live in faith, to keep seeking God's light for the next step, and to keep depending on Him. When we dare to do the impossible that God instructs us to do, only one thing remains for us: *Faith that God will make it work!*

Prayer:

† Pray that Christians will obey God, even if His instructions do not make sense. According to Hebrews 11:6, obedience is a question of faith. Pray for the faith to do what God tells you to do about land reform.

As Christian agriculturalists, we believe that God often gives His children instructions that do not make sense. Commands that are only possible if they believe that He can and wants to do miracles to make it possible for them to obey. This is probably what will happen regarding land reform. Obedience demands that we have the faith of a child.



Day 22

Practice to do strange things

(*God's Way* principle: It is so radically different that it seems like nonsense)

Read: Luke 6:27-36 and 1 Peter 1:1

Because God's way of doing things is so radically different, we as Christians should live lives that are radically different to that of the world. Because of our new identity and heavenly citizenship, we are strangers to this world.



I once read a story about a radically different and strange thing a businessman did. *Will, the owner of a large company, identified John, the manager of one of the factory's plants, to become executive manager of the company. Will trained and prepared John for the new job. John began earning more than Will. But, suddenly and unexpectedly, John resigned. He was not even willing to train a new manager to replace him. In spite of the disappointment, Will paid John a large bonus. Three months later, the reason for John's resignation became apparent when he started a similar business. He started copying Will's best products. Soon, John's business became one of Will's most important competitors. However, Will forgave John and kept praying for him. Nine years later, Will heard about a flaw in the design of one of John's new products. John faced several court cases. Will felt that the Lord was expecting him to help John. He bought one of Will's products and instructed his engineers to find the problem. Then he called John and told him what the problem was and how to fix it.* [You can read the story in the book by Larry Burkett: *Business by THE BOOK*]

Will's behaviour differs radically from the way most businessmen would behave in similar circumstances. But Will was living Luke 6:27-36. Christ's attitude became apparent in Will's behaviour. Like Christ, he did not think only of what was best for him, but also of what was best for John, even though John was his competitor (Philippians 2:3-8). He prayed for John and wanted to be a blessing to John – at his own expense. This is the kind of strange attitude we need to solve the land problem. Selfishness will result in conflict. Acting in a way that is *normal* will not make a difference. Obeying God in faith and even doing what does not make sense, will result in miracles.

Prayer:

† Pray that we as Christians will not be scared or too timid to behave in a way that is radically different to that of the world. Pray that we will obey all God's instructions, and not only do what seems logical and sensible.



Day 23

Unity and co-operation

(God's Way principle: Unity and co-operation)

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

There is absolute unity and co-operation between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They created everything together (Genesis 1:2; John 1:1-2). Together they decided to create people (Genesis 1:26). Read the Gospel of John and the unity and co-operation between the **Father and the Son** becomes apparent (John 1:18; 5:23 & 30; 10:30 & 38; 14:9-11 & 26-31; 15:10; 16:15-24; 17:21-23). There are many texts about the unity and co-operation between the **Father and the Spirit** (John 14:26; Romans 8:15). The **Son and the Spirit** also work closely together (John 14:26; Romans 8:9). The Father equipped the Son with the Holy Spirit to carry out His instruction (Matthew 3:16-17). Our salvation is the result of the co-operation between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:1-14).

Unity and co-operation characterise the essence of God. This is what God is like and this is how He does everything. But it does not end here. Unity expands because Jesus brought reconciliation:

- God made us **one** with Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:13).
*Then He commanded us to be **one** with Him and to remain in Him (John 15:4-10; Colossians 2:6-7).*

- God also made all His children **one** by joining them in one body, the church of Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16).
*Then He commanded His children to be **one**, even though they speak different languages and even though they belong to different tribes and nations (Ephesians 2:13-16).*

God always makes it possible for us to carry out His instructions. Therefore, He makes us one before commanding us to be one. He says we must keep becoming what we already are, namely one! Put differently: We can be one because He has already made us one (Ephesians 4:3)! Believers *must* be united. This is the will and command of the King.



It is not negotiable. Love and unity between believers is the one thing that makes the world believe in Christ (John 17:21-23).

Prayer:

† Pray for greater unity and co-operation in agriculture and between all the role players involved in land reform.

Day 24
Unity and co-operation is revealed
when people pray together

(God's Way principle: Unity and co-operation)

Read: Matthew 18:19-20

How children ask their parents for certain things clearly indicate the level of unity between the children. When a child tries to get his parents alone to ask something behind the other children's backs, it points to disunity. The request will probably be a selfish one. However, when a child is willing to ask something openly in front of the other children, there is unity. When children approach their parents together and one child asks for something on behalf of one of the other children, parents know that there is absolute unity between their children. Then parents are more than willing to acquiesce.

In his book, *Transformation*, Ed Silvoso tells the story of two lawyers who prayed together (page 12). The one lawyer represented a group of creditors and the other an aviation company. The creditors brought an application to have the aviation company declared bankrupt. It was a difficult case because, on the one side, millions of dollars was at stake and, on the other, thousands of job opportunities were at stake. The two lawyers prayed to the Lord for a win-win solution. And He gave them one! Out of the blue, a solution was found that took the aviation company out of its financial crisis and turned it back into a successful business.



I am convinced that there are Christians who own land and Christians who want land. There are also Christians in government and the Department of Agriculture. *When believers from these groups get together regularly to pray for each other and for land reform, the Lord will listen to them* (cf. Malachi 3:16). He will see that there is no selfishness but true unity and co-operation – an honest desire for justice. When believers on different sides start praying together, God is ready to start performing miracles – miracles we have not seen, heard or thought possible.

Believers on farms and in rural communities should start praying together first. They are right in the middle of the land question. Thus, a group of 25 Christians from six districts gathered one weekend in July on a farm near Groblershoop and prayed. Black and white prayed for each other, about agricultural transformation and for land reform. They prayed for government, the ministers involved and for agricultural leaders. It was a special occasion and ended with a celebration of Holy Communion – the celebration of our unity with Christ and with each other.

Joint prayer meetings should expand from the farms to places and events where leaders from various groups are present. Special prayer meetings may be organised.

Prayer:

† Pray that Christians representing all the different groups will pray together often - not only for land reform, but also for each other.

Day 25

Abahlobo: To be *buddies*

(*God's Way* principle: Unity and co-operation)

Read: Ruth 1:16-17 and 1 Samuel 23:16-18, and John 15:15

The big mistake we often make is to think that unity between people can be created by structures. You can pour oil and water into the same pot, but they will never mix. Oil will always surface to the top and will stay there. Unity may be hampered and bedevilled by structures. The Spirit must create a bond of unity and love between people before they can seek a fitting structure to give expression to their unity.



The relationship between Paul and Timothy is a good example of a model for discipleship. Paul was like a father to Timothy (1 Timothy 1:2) and Timothy followed Paul in every way (2 Timothy 3:10-11). Elijah was Elisha's teacher and mentor. He trained and prepared Elisha to follow in his footsteps (1 Kings 19:16b and 2 Kings 2:1-3 & 15, and 3:12). The problem with words such as *discipleship* and *mentorship* is that discipleship today has been *spiritualised* and limited to the church, while mentorship is still struggling to rid itself of its connotation of *being the boss*. Discipleship and mentorship can only succeed where a deeper relationship of respect, love, real friendship and mutual trust already exists between the parties.

The model for real friendship is found throughout the Bible. Consider the relationship between Naomi and Ruth, and Naomi's well-known words in Ruth 1:16-17. Think of the friendship between David and Jonathan and the covenant they made with each other before the Lord. Jonathan encouraged David to trust in the Lord. He believed in David and did all he could to help David become the man and king God ordained him to be. He did not put his own interest first. Nor did he think about his own safety. He put his *buddy* first. This is a good example of the spirit and attitude Philippians 2:3-5 demands of us. Think about the way in which Proverbs describes friendship in sections such as Proverbs 27 verses 5-6, 9 & 17. Friends teach each other, set each other right, advise each other, help each other and form one another's personality and character. However, it is in Jesus that we really see true friendship. We will learn more about it tomorrow.

The question is: Do you have *buddies* in agriculture? Are you a *buddy* to other agriculturalists, no matter what their race or the size of their farm may be? Or are you, in contrast to Christ's instruction, a *buddy* to those you hope to gain something from in return (Luke 6:32-35)?

Prayer:

† Pray that agriculturalists will become each other's *buddies* and that real friendships, modelled on Scripture, will be established.



Day 26

Jesus, our model for real friendship

(*God's Way* principle: Unity and co-operation)

Read: John 15:15

We had a professor at university who used to call us his *junior partners*. He never made us feel inferior even though our knowledge and abilities were not a patch of his. He raised our status from that of being students to junior partners (with the expectation that junior partners will later become senior and full partners).

This is exactly what Jesus did in John 15:15. He raised our status from servants (workers) to friends. By doing so, He freed us from inferiority and enabled us to live up to His expectations.

This is the challenge for us as Christian agriculturalists. We must learn to treat our sons, our employees, and young and/or inexperienced farmers in a manner that will not make them feel inferior to us. We must raise their status from being workers to being our partners. We must raise their status from being subservient to being our friends. Only then will they start believing in themselves and be able to farm successfully, the way we expect them to.

According to the Word, Jesus came to share His knowledge and His skills with us, His friends. In fact, He came to share everything with us. He gave us His Spirit so that, as His friends, we could be His kindred spirit. This was and is His desire: that we, His friends, will achieve what He has achieved. That we will do what He did, and even more. He put our interests before His own and was willing to die so that we could live. No one has a greater love than that, namely, to be willing to lay down his life for his friends.

This is the kind of friendship we need in agriculture. This is the kind of friendship that will make the Lord pour out His blessings over us like rain.



This is the kind of friendship that will turn the mountain of land reform into a molehill. This is the kind of friendship that will reveal God's Kingdom to a broken world. This is the kind of friendship that will bring healing for the terrible pain and fear people carry with them – people on both sides of the spectrum.

What a Friend we have in Jesus! Let us go and be a friend and a *buddy* to others.

Prayer:

† In the world, friendship is often cultivated with a view to what we can gain from it. (Read Proverbs 19:4 again.) Christians should ask, *What could I mean to my friend? How can I serve my friend?* Pray for friendships in agriculture; friendships modelled on Christ.

As Christian agriculturalists, we believe that the solution for many problems in agriculture lies in developing close friendships between agriculturalists. Not self-centred friendships with a view to personal gain, but friendships in which agriculturalists serve and help one another to become and be the people God ordained them to be.

Day 27

The church must take the lead

(*God's Way* principle: Unity and co-operation)

Read: Matthew 12:46-50 and Philemon:15-16

In the church, we often address each other as *brother* and *sister*. But do we really understand what it means?



Jesus raised our status from that of being servants to being His friends. But He went even further. He raised the status of His friends to that of family. He calls us His brothers and His sisters (Matthew 12:46-50; Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:11-12). It is a great privilege to be called brother or sister by Jesus.

We share this privilege with many others. All who are Jesus' brother and sister are also brothers and sisters to each other, whether they are missionaries, employers or employees. They all have the same Father and are members of the same family (Philemon 15-16; Hebrews 1:11; Ephesians 2:11-22).

Churches, rural congregations in particular, have a godly responsibility to educate and teach their members to view all their fellow-believers as brothers and sisters and to treat them as such. Congregations should be the first to strike up friendships across borders. The present crisis in agriculture is about relationships, and relationships should be number one on the church's agenda (John 17:21-23; Ephesians 2:11-22). That is, if we take Jesus and His work seriously. If the church has become a bastion of language, culture, tradition and own interest (no matter which language, culture or tradition it may be), the problems agriculturalists (black and white) are battling with will get worse. The church should be helping agriculturalists realise their godly calling.

The church (all denominations) must take the lead in breaking down prejudice and misperceptions on both sides, building friendships, and cultivating understanding and appreciation for one another's differences (without approving of sinful behaviour which are part of all cultures). If there ever was a time in which the church were to take its calling seriously, then it is now. As agriculturalists, we have a great appreciation for congregations that do so, but we are extremely sad about the many that don't.

Prayer:

- † Pray that rural congregations and churches will take the lead in restoring and building relationships between churches, population groups, employers and employees, and between agriculturalists.
- † Pray that leaders of all congregations (church leaders) will obey the Lord completely and will provide members with the proper leadership.



As Christian agriculturalists, we believe that rural congregations and churches must take the lead in restoring and building relationships between local congregations, population groups, employers and employees, and between agriculturalists in general.

Day 28

Confession and forgiveness lead to unity

(God's Way principle: Unity and co-operation)

Read: James 5:16-18 and 2 Chronicles 7:14

Individuals need healing, but so do families, churches, groups, races and countries; those who committed injustice and those who were wronged. We need Godly healing in agriculture. And according to the Word, healing follows after confession of sin, forgiveness and sincere prayer for each other. Sixteen years on, many are still suffering from the disease and side effects of Apartheid (things such as racism, discrimination and reverse discrimination, bitterness, mistrust, etcetera). This is true for all South Africans.

I once asked Boet Pretorius, former Zimbabwean farmer, what really caused the land crisis in that country. His answer was perceptive: **God said, Rule over the land and love the people. But we loved the land and ruled over the people.** This is the sin that must be confessed. It applies to agriculturalists from the Apartheid era and to agriculturalists that still harbour the spirit of Apartheid in their hearts. It also applies to all who walk over and trample people to gain land. When we start looking each other in the eye and confess that our love for land is greater than our love for people, when we start praying for each other sincerely, God will heal agriculture.

There is so much that needs to be confessed on both sides: The injustice of Apartheid, invalid land claims and the consequent suffering, corruption and millions of rand's fraud (which could have been spent on buying farms), farm murders, the theft of livestock and produce, bad service delivery, exploitation,



self-enrichment, damage caused by incompetence, racism, mistrust and suspicion, laziness, failed empowerment projects and accompanying job losses and waste of money, etcetera. Those who claim to be without sin or not part of the cause of the emergency situation in agriculture, are deceiving themselves (1 John 1:8-10).

You have a choice. You can use all these things as an excuse to mould your perceptions of others in concrete. You can decide to keep complaining and to cling to your bitterness. But, then you will never be free to really live and fulfil your own calling. Or, you can choose to forgive others and set them free. You can choose to conquer evil with good, instead of returning evil with evil. You can choose to love recklessly instead of cursing others. You can deceive yourself by believing that you are always right and others always wrong, or you can confess your share in the problem and set an example for others so that they will also confess their part. You can choose to ask for forgiveness again and again, instead of self-righteously emphasising the sins of others. Surely Matthew 5:41 applies here: *If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.*

Prayer:

† *Lord, I sincerely confess my share in the problems regarding the ownership of land and land reform. I confess the injustices I have committed, and also the good that I did not do. Please show me everything I need to confess specifically and by name so that I may be set free and be healed to fulfil my calling and to help others be healed and set free. Lord, come and heal the terrible pain in our agricultural community.*



As Christian agriculturalists, we admit and confess that Apartheid and the accompanying discriminatory laws on land ownership made victims of us all. We admit and confess that the system and laws destroyed relationships, destroyed the credibility of our Christian testimony, caused economic hardship for many, physical disruption and deep emotional pain. As Christian agriculturalists who were separated by Apartheid, we ask for forgiveness from everyone who was wronged by what we did. We also offer unconditional forgiveness to everyone who harmed us in any way. We absolve them so that together, we can search for win-win solutions for the way ahead and build God's kingdom in agriculture.

Read the last chapter of Nelson Mandela's autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*. He tells of his discovery that Apartheid made slaves of both white and black. He also tells of his realisation that he would never be free himself unless he forgave the whites because black and white were both victims of a cruel system.

Day 29

God works through people

(*God's Way* principle: God works through people)

Read: Genesis 1:26-28

I often hear people saying, *God is in control. What will be, will be.* It sounds so pious and right! But, does it prove their faith? Or could it be a way of dodging their responsibility?



This brings us to many important questions: ***Does God need you and me to pray? Or does He just want us to pray? Does God need us to do something? Or does He just want to use us to do something?*** Many argue that an almighty God needs nothing – neither our prayers nor us. In a sense, this is true, because God is God. We depend on Him, not He on us. But what do we understand by God’s omnipotence?

To me, it means that God ***can*** do everything He ***wants*** to do. What God does not ***want*** to do, He ***cannot*** do. He does not want to sin and, therefore, He cannot sin. The real question, therefore, is not whether God ***can*** do everything without us and our prayers, but whether God ***wants*** to do anything without us and our prayers. If God still does everything He wants to do without us, why do we pray? Are we wasting our time? Certainly not! God decided, of His own free will, to make His will and His desire for the world depend on people’s prayers. The well-known man of God, John Wesley said, *God does nothing on earth except in answer to believing prayer.*

God entrusted creation to Adam (representative of all of humankind) completely. He made Adam responsible for creation. This is clear from the position in which God put Adam. It is also clear from the task and responsibility He gave Adam. People were commanded to manage and take care of creation as God’s representatives, on His behalf. Thus, God put people between Himself and the rest of creation. What would happen to creation was in the hands of people – God put it there. Earth was people’s responsibility. In order for people to be able to carry out God’s instruction, God made them a lot like Himself. He created people in His image, in His likeness.

God, out of His own free will, decided that the realisation of His will on earth would depend on people. This truth is confirmed by the following:

1. **God entrusted the earth to Adam so completely that Adam could do with it as he liked.** When the devil tempted the Lord Jesus, he showed Him all the kingdoms of the earth in an instant (according to Luke 4:5-7) and said, *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 refute the devil’s claim that he owns all the kingdoms, because He knew that Adam had indeed given everything God entrusted to him to the devil.



2. God entrusted the earth to Adam. What would become of the earth and all its inhabitants, good or bad, God put in the hands of Adam and his descendants. (This does not mean that God turned His back on creation and is not involved in it. He never lets go of the work of His hands.) **This decision of God, not to take responsibility for earth back out of the hands of people, was so final, that He had to become a person Himself so that He could fix what Adam had messed up.** In Christ, God had to become a man - the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). Only as a **Man** (human being) could God change the destiny of that which He had entrusted to people.
3. This explains why God did not use the angels to **proclaim the Gospel**. Once again, He gave this responsibility to people (Matthew 28:18-20). No matter how much God wants to save people, He does not send workers to gather in the harvest unless His children have specifically asked 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 forever with the One (Jesus) who saved them** (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 22:5). In Christ, our sovereignty is not revoked, but confirmed forever! In Christ, we are not relieved of our task. No, in and through Him God set us free from evil. In Him He empowered us to once again obey our original calling, namely to rule over and take care of the earth on God's behalf, as His representatives.

Because God decided, of 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 them. His children are His body here on earth. Therefore, not praying and still arguing, *What will be, will be because God is omnipotent*, is reckless, false piety and blatant disobedience.

A new and just land dispensation that will benefit everyone, is God's will and desire. But it will not happen by itself. It is your and my responsibility to keep praying for it and to do what God commands us to do. *The success of the land reform process depends on you and me.* Make yourself available to God. Use your privilege of access to places, information and support that the world does not have (compare Day 3). Start by making much more time to pray. Establish prayer groups where you live and work.



Prayer:

- † Pray for Christians in rural and agricultural communities to realise that the success of agricultural transformation and land reform depends on them. God wants to do it through them.
- † Pray the prayer one of the church fathers, Augustine, prayed, *Lord, ask what you please, but also give what you ask.*

Day 30

God empowers people to do their job and so should we

(*God's Way* principle: God works through people)

Read: Genesis 1:26-28 and Isaiah 28:23-29

Throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, God empowered people. This is one of the basic attributes of the Lord: He always enables people to carry out His commands and instructions (Philippians 2:13 and Leviticus 25:20-22). He empowers them. It is entirely out of character for Him to give people responsibility without empowering them to bear the responsibility.

In Genesis 1:27-28, God empowered Adam and Eve by blessing them. Thus He enabled them to carry out His command and to fulfil their calling. In Exodus 35:30 – 36:1, we read that the Lord enabled Bezalel and Oholiab to perform their crafts with skill and to train and teach other artisans to do so too. *... and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts - ...* (Exodus 35:31). In 1 Samuel 16 to 31, we read how the Lord prepared David to become King of Israel over a period of ten years. In Isaiah 28 we read that the Lord taught farmers and gave them the knowledge to do everything the way it should be done. Think about the way in which Jesus trained and empowered His disciples for three years to enable them to carry out the command to make disciples of all the nations.



Putting people on agricultural land and expecting them to farm without empowering them to do so, is irresponsible. It is also unbiblical and cruel. They are humiliated when they fail. The giving of land is not empowerment. In contrast to the popular expression, ***Develop the land for the people***, we are convinced that the biblical approach is the exact opposite: ***Develop the people for the land***.

Farming is not child's play, although many people think so. Farming is a business that must keep account of all the aspects of a normal business. It is a factory without a roof or security fences. It is exposed to ever-changing weather conditions and many other environmental conditions. Besides all the internal factors, many external influences need to be taken into account - economical, political, social and ecological factors. Think of the limited water resources, or the influence of subsidies that American and European farmers receive from their governments, have on markets. All these things make the methodical and purposeful empowerment of agriculturalists imperative.

Understanding the Business of Farming is an Amos course aimed at helping skilled agriculturalists teach young and/or inexperienced farmers and farm workers to understand the business of farming. Empowerment begins on the farm – empower yourself to empower others!

Prayer:

- † Pray for the empowerment of skilled agriculturalists, so that they will be willing and able to empower young and/or inexperienced farmers and farm workers.
- † Pray that the empowerment of new farmers will become a greater priority for government and commercial farmers. Pray that new farmers will be motivated to master the knowledge and skills they need before accepting sole responsibility for a farming enterprise and the land.



As Christian agriculturalists, we believe that knowledge and skills should be passed on to a new generation of agriculturalists before they are given the responsibility of managing an agricultural business or receiving agricultural land. We believe it is unkind, irresponsible and unfair to give people responsibility and only passing on the knowledge and skills they need for that responsibility later when they have been hurt already.

Day 31

God has open hands

(*God's Way* principle: Open hands)

Read: 2 Peter 1:3 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

It is entirely impossible to read the Bible without coming to the following two conclusions:

- The God of the Bible is a God who has open hands. He gives and shares everything with us!
- Because God created us in His image, He expects His children to live with open hands and to mirror the image of their generous God by their own generosity.

According to Genesis 1, God shares His image, His breath, His creativity and His dominion with people. When we read the Old Testament we see that God's hands never close. All that is good and beautiful comes from His hands. 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). He gave Himself to us.

Christ gave Himself to us when He hung on the cross with open hands. From those open hands a flood of gifts and blessings pours over us. He gives us His absolution, holiness and justice (1 Corinthians 1:30). He gives us the salvation He brought about for us. He shares His victory with us and now we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us (Romans 8:37). He shares His death and resurrection with us and so we receive a new life and a



new identity (Romans 6; Colossians 2:20 to 3:17 et.seq). He gives us a whole variety of gifts from the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4-11 & 27-28; Romans 12:4-8). He gives us the power to heal the sick and to cast out devils (Matthew 10:8; Luke 10:1-3 17; Mark 16:16-18). He shares His peace, joy, love and wisdom with us (Johns 14:27 & 15:11; Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 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 and He will give it to us (John 14:13-14). He tears the curtain to the Most Holy Place and by His blood, He grants us free access to the throne of God (Hebrews 10:19). He shares His inheritance with us. 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 prepare a place for us so that we may 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).

We are so rich, so privileged, so blessed! Our God has open hands. Clearly He wants us, His children, to have open hands too. Those who do not read it in the Bible do not want to see. They are blinded by the idol of greed (Ephesians 5:5). They are like the rich young man who served the Lord until the Lord expected him to share. Then he turned around and walked away (Matthew 19:16-30). The extent to which we serve God or Mammon is only clear when the Lord tells us to give.

Prayer:

† Worship, glorify and thank God for His open hands!

Day 32

Generosity!

(*God's Way* principle: Open hands)

Read: 2 Corinthians 8:9-15 and 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Private ownership is biblical! Think about Naboth who could refuse to sell his land to the king (1 Kings 21); Jeremiah who, at the Lord's instruction, had to buy land (Jeremiah 32); Ananias and Saphira who could do as they pleased with the money they received for their land (Acts 5).



The command not to steal or desire someone else's property only makes sense when the right to private ownership is accepted (Exodus 20:15 & 17). Thus, the principle of a willing seller and a willing buyer is completely biblical.

Socialism is a good way of making everyone equally poor. **Capitalism** is a good way of making some rich and increasing the gap between rich and poor. The Bible never limits the amount someone may own, but everyone is commanded to be generous and to share. **Christian generosity** is God's way of fighting poverty. Some still have a lot, but they do not have too much. Others have little, but not too little (2 Corinthians 8:13-15; Acts 2:44 & 4:32-37). [2 Corinthians 8 and 9 are about poverty relief, generosity and helping fellow believers.] Poverty relief is not a by-product of the Gospel. It is a fundamental part of the Gospel. **Christian generosity** is the only way in which we can destroy the idol of greed (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5) in our lives.

You and I are quick to declare that our land belongs to the Lord and that our land is not our idol. What a wonderful testimony. But how can we prove that it is true? **Talk is cheap** says the proverb. The sincerity of your faith and mine needs to be tested (1 Peter 1:6-7). The sincerity of the above two testimonies also needs to be tested. How?

Exactly how important the rich young man's money and property were to him only became apparent when Jesus ordered Him to give it away. How important Ananias and Saphira's money was to them, only became apparent when they lied about having given away the whole amount. In my heart I am convinced that the Lord will test the sincerity of Christian agriculturalists' testimonies about their land and possessions at this time.

Think about the following two questions:

- Are you willing to pray about the ownership of your land and God's command for Christian generosity – until you receive a clear answer?
- Are you willing to obey God and, in faith to do what He tells you to, even if it does not make sense to you?



Do not be afraid. In all three versions of the rich young man, the Lord promises temporal and eternal blessings to everyone who relinquishes, among other things, land, property and homes, **for the sake of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God** (Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-30; Luke 18:18-30).

You *must* give. You need not pray about it because the Word already says so. (Do you need to pray and ask the Lord if you need to love someone?) All you need to pray about is **when to give how much of what to whom?**

Prayer:

† *Lord, I confess that I have nothing that I did not receive. Therefore, I ask you to help me treat everything I have as though it belongs to you, because, in truth, it is yours. Make me generous, the way you are generous! I pray that you will do this for all agriculturalists.*

† *Lord, help us to cultivate a culture of giving.*

As Christian agriculturalists, we believe that, where land reform is concerned, all who own land should prayerfully consider the option of giving part of his/her land, or a share in it, to people (especially fellow believers) who have the will and ability to farm alone, or with him/her.



Day 33

The attitude and ways of giving

(God's Way principle: Open hands)

Read: Deuteronomy 15:1-18

I know that you can give many good reasons why you should not give - reasons that all make sense if you do not want to give. But if you do want to give, it is just as easy to find a whole lot of ways in which to give:

The attitude with which you give is very important. Give voluntarily ...

- Because you love the one to whom you are giving as yourself (because it does not help to give if you don't love – 1 Corinthians 13:3)
- Out of gratitude for everything you have received
- Because you want to reflect the image of your generous God
- Because you want to obey the Lord
- Because the Spirit has filled you (Acts 4:31-37)
- Because you love people and want to help them become self-sufficient
- Because you are merciful like your merciful Father
- To right the injustices of the past, like Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8) who gave back what he had wrongfully gained (restitution)
- To break the power and hold money and possessions so easily gain over people (Ecclesiastes 5:9; Luke 18:18 -)
- Because giving makes you happier than receiving (Acts 20:35)
- You may be willing to suffer losses for the sake of Christ rather than becoming involved in conflict (Matthew 5:40-42; 1 Corinthians 6:7-8; Hebrews 10:34)

In order to give you may need to be willing to scale down on your lifestyle. The quality of your life does not depend on your lifestyle. (Again read Jesus' words in Luke 12:25.) A friend of mine in KZN recently told me that he and his wife decided to live life 30% cheaper for the sake of the Kingdom. He said it was shocking to discover that they did not even need to give up anything that was really important to them. Another friend told me of their new approach to the cost of living: ***Live simply, so that others may simply live.*** We will have to learn to distinguish between a high cost of living and the cost of living the high life (Amos 4:1 et seq).



There are different ways in which to give responsibly. Our circumstances and means differ. **The Lord expects everyone to give, but He does not expect everyone to give the same, equally or in the same way.** There are different ways of giving in the Bible:

- You can give without expecting anything back (Luke 6:27-36)
- You can give an interest free loan (Psalm 15:5 & 37:26)
- You can write off debt, or a percentage of the debt (Deuteronomy 15:1-11; Leviticus 25:10; Nehemiah 5:11; Luke 6:34-36)
- You can leave something for others to use (Deuteronomy 24:19-21)
- You can give someone an opportunity to get on his feet and to become self-sufficient. This is what is behind many financial instructions in the Bible (Cf Deuteronomy 15:12-18)
- You can give what you have (Acts 3:5-6): You can give knowledge and share experience. You can pass on skills. You can give Jesus and His Word. You can give time to someone and really, patiently listen. You can give someone your prayers. You can give someone physical and emotional healing in the Name of Jesus. You can give a new farmer a couple of sheep – if you do it with many others the farmer will soon be on his feet. You can give someone your friendship and be a brother or sister to someone – a buddy! There are endless ways in which to give sincere love!

Take note of Day 35: Give responsibly.

There is an added bonus to giving: You are free to decide to whom you want to give what when, and on what terms and conditions (if any) you want to do it. You can do as you please with what is yours (Acts 5:4).

On our recent visit to Uganda, our Ugandan friends told us about a lovely custom they have when two people get married. Family and friends who are able each give the couple a cow. Our friends talk of between 70 and 90 head of cattle that they received as wedding presents. However, the couple is obliged to give the first heifer each cow has, back to the person who gave them the cow. Therefore, the cows are in fact an interest free loan that enables the couple to start their own farming business.



Prayer:

- † Pray that the Lord will open His children's eyes to see how much they really have to give.
- † Pray that the Lord will show you when to give what to who. Pray and listen until you hear.
- † Pray that agriculturalists will be good stewards of everything they have received from the Lord.

Day 34

Give in obedience, even if your sums do not add up

(*God's Way* principle – Open hands)

Read: 2 Kings 4:42-44 and Proverbs 11:24-25

Like the disciples did with the multiplication of bread in Mark 6:35, Elisha's slave in 2 Kings 4 also first made his sums to decide whether obedience made sense. We do it too. We immediately think about our financial position and circumstances, we make our sums, and then decide whether it makes sense economically to obey God or not. Of course you should do your calculations in your day-to-day planning and handling of money (Luke 14:28-30). But, when the Lord gives you a specific instruction, you must obey Him unconditionally, no matter what your sums say.

I recall my own experience at the beginning of 2006. Our family was already convinced that the Lord expected us to give some of our personnel a share in our farming business. But, it did not make sense. Our business was too young and too small, and we had to make room for our son who would get his B.Sc. Agric degree at the end of that year. On 15 January 2006, I fasted and prayed for clarity. I did my sums and protested to the Lord: *It cannot work, Lord. Your command does not make sense.* Then the Lord spoke to me from 2 Kings 4:42-44. He clearly said to me, *Do not make sums before you obey me. Do as I say and you will find that there will be some left. I will make sure that you have more than enough.*



Recently a farmer told me the testimony of his grandfather Snyman (TS) Pretorius. He rode to his job at the blacksmith in town every day during 1937. He had a hard time because the blacksmith did not stick to their agreement about payment. A farmer gave him a piece of land on which to plant wheat and the Lord blessed him with a very good harvest. He made £25 on the wheat. He took the money to Volkskas Bank and got a chequebook. In spite of his own suffering and needs, he asked the Lord what he should do with the money. The Lord told him to give five businesses/people £5 each. The fifth person was the blacksmith who did not pay him. This did not make sense to Oupa Snyman, but he started writing out the cheques – the first four! When he reached the last cheque, he hesitated. *He owes me money. I don't owe him Lord*, he argued. Eventually he decided to obey God and wrote out the last cheque too. Years later, TS Pretorius owned 27 farms. God is faithful. All we need to do is to learn to obey Him before we make our calculations.

If Gideon's obedience to God depended on his calculations, he would never have gone to war against the Midianites with 300 soldiers (Judges 6-8). If the widow's decision to obey or not depended on her sums, she would never have given Elijah her last cake of bread (1 Kings 17:8-16). Then neither Gideon nor the widow would have experienced the wonder of God's power to perform miracles.

Prayer:

† Pray that Christians (you too) will obey God in faith, and not only when their sums add up and His instructions make sense to them.

As Christian agriculturalists, we believe that matters must be done in the proper sequence: First faith and obedience, and then sums. Anything is possible for God. Therefore, we may not do our sums before deciding to obey God. We must obey Him in faith and when we make our sums later, we will discover that nothing is impossible for Him.



Day 35

Give responsibly

(God's Way principle: Open hands)

Read: Proverbs 13:11 and 23:5

The truth of these two proverbs is confirmed by the saying, **easy come, easy go**. In farming, I teach agriculturalists that *money creeps in at the back door, but rushes out of the front door*. It is easier to spend money than to make it. If you do make a large sum of money (or get many possessions) easily, eg by inheritance or with government help, it rushes out of the front door even more quickly. Then you should be extra careful.

I recently presented one of Amos' courses, *Understanding the Business of Farming* in the Eastern Cape. When we reached the section on finance and the dangers of instant wealth, one of the farm workers summed it up nicely by saying, ***If you put money and possessions in a man's hand before putting knowledge in his head, you are looking for trouble***. [You should really watch the film, *The Ultimate Gift*, with your children and/or employees. It is directly related to this issue.]

When our children were still at school, we started paying them a monthly *salary* each – taking their ages into consideration, of course. They were responsible for everything they wanted and needed except their school clothes. They learned to work with money from an early age. They learned financial self-discipline, to budget, to distinguish between what they needed and what they wanted. They had the financial freedom to do as they please with their money, but they also learned to bear the consequences of their financial decisions. They were always aware of the fact that money is limited and that they could not come begging for more.

Putting right the heritage of Apartheid in agriculture certainly demands that land and initial capital be given to the previously disadvantaged. No one can begin farming today without being helped by someone (it may be government). BUT, giving must be done responsibly. In one way or another, it should be possible to guarantee that possessions gained so easily will not get wings and fly away. Every agreement should include a plan to prevent what Proverbs 13:5 and 23:5 talk about.



There should be guarantees that that which is given will indeed serve the purpose it was given for. A precious, rare and expensive commodity such as agricultural land cannot be handed over to people recklessly. Various skills, moral values, beliefs and good marital relationships are important when choosing suitable candidates. Besides, candidates should also have a passion for agriculture, be able to contribute to food security and have basic financial skills in order to be considered beneficiaries of agricultural land.

Those who need agricultural land the most are also those who need financial knowledge and a variety of other skills the most. Farm workers and their children are especially in need of empowerment to enable them to become worthy and able farmers. (On condition that we realise that not all people are entrepreneurs and/or potential sole owners of a business as complex as farming.)

Prayer:

- † Pray against the danger of instant wealth, and especially for young and/or new farmers. Pray that the Lord will grant them the wisdom and skill to use money the way He wants them to.
- † Pray that people will not put their trust in instant wealth (including the Lotto) but will be willing to learn, to be taught, and to work hard. Pray for people to be trustworthy in the little things.

As Christian agriculturalists, we believe that giving should be done in a responsible way and the dangers of instant wealth avoided. Beneficiaries should first be empowered to receive responsibly, and to use what they receive for the purpose it is given. *First knowledge in the head and then land and money in the hand.*



Day 36

Destroy the idol of greed and the spirit of land grabbing

(*God's Way* principle – Open hands)

Read: Matthew 6:24, Ephesians 5:5, Colossians 3:5, and Ecclesiastes 5:9

Greed is idolatry. You cannot serve God and Mammon. It is either one or the other.

The two sins the Old Testament prophets warned about most were idolatry, and social injustice (the absence of justice for all, including the poor and the defenceless.) People are continually called to break down the altars to false gods.

Greed is an idol and the altar to greed must be broken down. Greed must be destroyed. Greed says, *More, more, more, because I can never get enough. More, because I don't know what I may need tomorrow.* Christ came to destroy the work of the devil. Because Christ lives in us, we can destroy it too (1 John 3:8b & 4:4). The only way to break down the altar of the idol greed, is by doing the exact opposite of what it demands: *Give and give. Give a lot and keep on giving.* If you do not keep giving, the idol of greed will soon get the better of you and you will bow down before him once again. The materialistic world in which we live and the advertising industry, that is always creating false needs in you and me, keep building new altars to the idol of greed in our lives. Therefore, you and I must keep breaking down the altars by continually giving.

One of the many sins that result from worshiping the idol of greed is land grabbing. Land grabbing manifests in colonialism, Apartheid, the recent events in Zimbabwe and in many other ways – both lawful and unlawful. Like greed, land grabbing is a spirit that must be broken. The victory Christ gained over greed can manifest itself in our lives in one way only – by giving land instead of grabbing it. This is my conviction because of the testimony of the Word and the Spirit within me. There are already cracks in the altar of greed because a few farmers have already given (not sold) land. The more agriculturalists open their hands and give, the sooner the altar will be destroyed and the spirit of greed lose its hold on people.



You have read about the various ways in which to give earlier (Day 33). The possibilities are endless.

Prayer:

- † Confess all the selfishness and greed in your life. If you are overly concerned about possessions and your own comfort, confess it in the light of 1 John 2:15-17 and 2 Timothy 3:4. Pray that the Lord will show you if it is a problem in your life. We are often blind to such things in our lives because we are too used to them.
- † Pray against a fear of poverty because greed feeds on this fear. Makesure, one of my friends in Zimbabwe, once asked me, ***What is worse than poverty?*** He gave the answer himself: ***The fear of poverty!*** He saw that rich people's fear of poverty had a greater influence and hold on their lives than poverty had on the lives of the poor.

As Christian agriculturalists we believe that there is only one way of upholding the victory Christ has gained over the idol of greed and that is by doing the exact opposite: GIVING! There is only one way of destroying the spirit of land grabbing in Africa and that is by giving land.

Day 37

Reward faithfulness

(*God's Way* principle: Open hands)

Read: Matthew 25:14-30

AMOS has had many successes under the guidance of Boet, Lyson, Godfrey and Makesure. One of the principles is to ***reward people for being faithful.*** During the first year, farmers are trained in *Basic Principles of the Word* and *Farming God's Way*. They also receive what they need to plant 10m x 10m. They must put what they learn into practice on this piece of land.



Those who are faithful and do what they have learned, go on to do the course on *Marriage and family life* and a *financial course*. They also receive enough seed to plant half a hectare. The result of the project is that farmers are able to harvest ten times more than before.

The world often rewards unfaithfulness. This goes against the Word and always leads to a vicious circle of more poverty, dependence and irresponsibility. Think about the many child subsidies that are paid out monthly in South Africa. There is an increase in pregnancy among young girls. Poverty, dependence and irresponsibility are increasing.

Not everyone has equal means or skills – Scripture (Matthew 25:15) confirms this. The principle is to faithfully use what you have received whether it be a lot or a little. The faithful are rewarded. If you cannot work without supervision, how can you be appointed as a supervisor? If you cannot look after your bicycle, how can you expect to get a motor car? If you cannot spend R2 000 responsibly, only a fool will entrust you with R2 000 000. Therefore, people who are faithful in the small things should be chosen as beneficiaries. According to Scripture, they are the best people to entrust with more.

Prayer:

- † Pray that the Lord will make us faithful in the small things.
- † Pray that faithfulness in the little things will become an important standard for identifying beneficiaries for agricultural empowerment. Pray that political convictions, nepotism (favouring family and friends) and bribery will not have any part in it.

A; Christian agriculturalists, we believe that those who have been and are faithful in the little things should be chosen as beneficiaries for agricultural land. Land reform is not in the first place a charitable action, but it creates an opportunity for someone to become economically self-sufficient, to create job opportunities for others and to contribute to food security.



Day 38

Called to serve

(God's Way principle: To serve)

Read: Mark 10:41-45 and John 13:12-17, and Philippians 2:3-8

In the world, *servicing* is always one-way traffic. Those who are inferior serve those who are superior! The Lord says things should be different in the Kingdom of God. There *servicing* is two-way traffic. In the Kingdom, according to the example set by the King, those who are superior serve those who are inferior too (Mark 10:42-45), and the citizens serve each other (Galatians 5:13)!

To serve is to put the interests of others first. The first requirement for service is to *die to yourself*. When you have died with Christ, the "I" is dead, as are selfishness and self-interest. Then it is no longer you who are living, but Christ in you. And we know Him. He did not think of Himself, but gave Himself whole-heartedly, for our sake and for the sake of the kingdom of God (Romans 15:1-3). Because Jesus lives in them, Paul repeatedly writes to the people of Corinth that they must be willing to surrender certain rights and privileges. They should do so for the sake of others and for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. But he not only writes what they should do; he also shows them by the example he sets. He writes, *Surrender your right to go to court when a fellow-believer wrongs you* (1 Corinthians 8:1-8). *And relinquish your right to eat and drink what you please* (8:1-13). Then he points to himself and what he has done: *I relinquished my right to remuneration* (9:1-18), *and my right to live as I please* (9:19-27), *and my right to pray in tongues during a church service* (14:18-19). Because Paul died to himself, it was not painful for him to relinquish his rights. As far as he was concerned, he merely chose a better way.

In land reform, we should all turn our focus away from the attitude: *It is my right!* Instead we should ask, *Which way is better? How can I best serve the interests of others, the country and the Kingdom?*

To serve means to help others realise their dreams and ideals. The second demand for service is to *die to yourself*. Boet Pretorius, a Zimbabwean farmer who lost all three his farms in 2001, once asked a subsistence farmer in Zambia what his dream was. 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 what happened to you?* Boet answered, *Yes, my dream is to make you the best farmer in Zambia.* Let us as Christian agriculturalists help others to realise their agricultural dreams instead of merely chasing after our own dreams.

To serve means to allow those who are in need to change your agenda and to influence your budget. The third demand for service is to die to yourself, because an “I” who is alive and kicking refuses to serve. Being a servant means not making your own decisions about your daily programme. Your employer tells you what to do. He sets your agenda. Being a servant means allowing others who are suffering to determine our agenda. This is what the Good Samaritan did. The Samaritan left home with a purpose, some supplies, a budget and a time schedule. On his way, he ran into a man in distress. He immediately allowed the man in distress to change his schedule and his itinerary. He allowed the man to change his budget and to lay claim to his limited supply of food and medicine. He dismounted and placed his mount at the disposal of the stranger (Luke 10:25-37). Because he loved the man in distress as he loved himself, the Samaritan was willing to serve the man. Agriculture and the agricultural community in South Africa and Africa are in distress. Let us change our agendas and our budgets in order to address this need in an effective manner. Agriculturalists and government both need to do it now.

To serve means to change the fate and destiny of others. The fourth requirement for service is to die to yourself and to allow Jesus, the role model for all servants, to live in and through you. The manner in which Jesus came to serve us has permanently changed our fate and destiny! We were destined to be punished by God and for eternal death (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3). We were without God, without hope and without a future. But we have been saved. We own eternal life and are destined to share in Jesus’ eternal glory. The subservient way in which Jesus served us changed our fate and destiny permanently.

Many things threaten the future of the agricultural industry in South Africa and Africa. Land reform, if not handled properly, is one such threat. Ecological, economical, political, social, educational and moral factors threaten agriculture too. But, we can change the destiny of Africa and her people if we are willing to serve.



Prayer:

† Pray for Christian agriculturalists to be willing to serve others, now more than ever. Pray that we will have the heart and attitude of Jesus and that we will follow His example.

As Christian agriculturalists in Africa, we believe that we have been called to serve agriculture and the agricultural community in Africa to change the destiny and image of Africa. We undertake not to take only our own interests into consideration, but also that which is in the best interest of the Kingdom of God and the people of Africa.

Day 39

Effective service delivery

(*God's Way* principle: To serve)

Read: Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Timothy 2:1-4

My Bible is not a photo album, but there is one photo in my Bible – a newspaper clipping of the Minister of Agriculture. Each time I see the photo it reminds me of the Lord's command in 1 Timothy 2:1-2: I must serve the minister and her team with my prayers. I must bring their needs to the Lord. Workers on our farm pray for our minister and deputy minister of agriculture at the beginning of every workday. According to Romans 13 the Lord appointed them over us. Before we come to government's responsibility for service delivery we should ask: To what extent do you honour your responsibility to serve government with your prayers? After all, that is what the Lord instructed you and me to do! He will create a climate of peace and harmony in the country that will benefit agriculture and the kingdom of God in answer to our prayers.

This is not the time nor the place to say everything the Word has to say about government's task and responsibility. Sections such as Deuteronomy 1:9-18 and Psalm 78:70-72 and Romans 13:1-8 name a few such matters:



- Government has a responsibility to God. Those in government must remember that they too will have to account to God about the way they used the authority given to them.
- Government is a **servant** of God, called to **serve** the people over which it governs. The words used in Romans 13:4 & 6 for government are **diakonos** and **leitourgos**. The same words are used elsewhere to describe the *office* and task of a deacon and a minister of the Word. Therefore, God places government in a certain office and government must use the powers of this office to serve the people they govern.
- The most important responsibility government has is to be objective when handling differences between people. Government must see to it that there is peace and harmony in the country. Government must always remain impartial. (Read Deuteronomy 1:16-17.)
- Government's task differs from that of individual believers. Government must praise obedient citizens and punish wrongdoers. Believers, on the other hand, should conquer evil with good (Romans 12:17-21 & 13:4).
- Government and its officials should do their job with integrity and skill (Psalm 78:72). People in government should have wisdom, insight and knowledge, and should be people others can look up to (Deuteronomy 1:13).

Agriculturalists have a responsibility towards government and the country. Similarly, government has a responsibility to agriculturalists and all the citizens of the country. Agriculturalists also have a right to effective service delivery, the maintenance of rural infrastructure, being safe, being protected against all kinds of injustice, etcetera. If government does not take care of the agriculturalists, the agriculturalists will not be able to help government or new farmers in an effective manner. They will not be able to help make a success of the land reform process.

Ecclesiastes 5:9 says, *The increase from the land is taken by all; the king himself profits from the fields.* The Interlinear Bible translates it as, *And the advantage of a land, it is among all; even a king has a field being tilled.* And the New King James Version says, *Moreover the profit of the land is for all; even the king is served from the field.*



One thing is clear - everyone will benefit if we start serving each other the way Jesus showed us to.

Prayer:

- † Pray for government and all agricultural leaders. Pray for the minister of agriculture and everyone who works with her. Pray for everyone in the various national and provincial Departments of Agriculture.
- † Pray that all Christians in the agricultural community will honour their responsibility to pray for government and agricultural leaders.

When the above five God's Way principles are applied to dead-end situations, the results are always good and the possibilities endless. Apply them to your farm and your business will be renewed. Apply them to your marriage and you will experience fulfilment and marital joy. Apply them to your community and there will be unparalleled growth. Let us dare to apply these principles to land reform in faith. Based on the Word and my experience over the years, I am convinced that results are guaranteed.

As Christian agriculturalists, we submit ourselves to the authority of government because we believe that God appointed government over us. We accept our responsibility to keep praying for government and all those in authority. We declare ourselves willing to serve government with skilled, impartial and biblically justifiable advice regarding agricultural issues. We are willing to do everything we can to restore and build relationships that have a direct influence on agriculture and the agricultural community.

However, we also insist that government deliver an effective service to agriculture and the agricultural community. We expect insight and understanding for the unique nature of farming and the many risks it involves. We desire the support we need to ensure food security in South Africa and Africa and to become self-sufficient in our basic food requirements so that we will not be manipulated by countries exporting food.



Day 40

Become involved where you are

Read: Nehemiah 2:1-12 and 3:10, and verses 22-23 & 28-29

The Lord gave Nehemiah a vision (Nehemiah 2:12). The instruction he received was of national interest. He received authorisation and support from the king (Nehemiah 2:4-9), investigated the nature and scope of the task, and then motivated other people to get involved. Two things are striking: First, the king did not interfere in the operational plan or the day-to-day building process. It was not his place to do so. He gave the instruction and when the job was done, Nehemiah had to report to him (Nehemiah 13:6). Secondly, Nehemiah divided the work between the people (chapter 3). Most people were responsible for rebuilding the wall opposite their homes.

We are convinced that land reform will only succeed if the responsibility for it is sensibly divided between all the role players, especially between government, organised agriculture and beneficiaries.

One suggestion is that government should merely draw up broad policy guidelines and goals, in consultation with the agricultural sector, of course. Local farmers' societies should be responsible for establishing new farmers in their own area and reporting to government. Responsibilities could be divided as follows:

The state:

- ✓ Creating policy and realistic time frameworks
- ✓ Creating realistic goals
- ✓ Funding according to ability and budget – not only of land, but also relevant training and equipment
- ✓ Professional support, especially by an effective Department of Agriculture
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluating farmers' society results



Famers' societies:

- ✓ Drawing up operational plans taking local circumstances into account
- ✓ Identifying and selecting candidates from their own area
- ✓ Deciding what kind of training is required
- ✓ Training candidates (by themselves or by trainers of their choice)
- ✓ Identifying suitable good land
- ✓ Supporting candidates throughout the process and engaging with various agricultural sectors
- ✓ Deciding what they should contribute - land, implements, production means, services, etcetera
- ✓ Day-to-day management of the project
- ✓ Reporting to the Minister of Agriculture

This approach has many advantages for everyone:

1. It is based on relationships and mutual trust, and encourages unity in agriculture
2. It takes local circumstances into account
3. It leaves room for a variety of plans and approaches
4. Land reform is privatised to a large extent and people become willing to take ownership for making a success of the process
5. Smaller farmers (who are in the majority) who cannot make a real contribution on their own get an opportunity to become involved together
6. The many and varied skills (of men and women) that are available in farmers' societies are all used and not only the limited knowledge and skills of one mentor
7. A healthy spirit of competition develops between farmers' societies as their reputation is at stake
8. Skill, knowledge and passion are all brought to the table as there is at least one person in every farmers' society who has a real calling for the process and who will want to take the lead
9. Models of success are established throughout the country
10. Agriculture and related companies may be involved in various ways at a local level
11. Local churches can make an important contribution
12. Attention can be given to the education and upbringing of the children of beneficiaries early on, thus making sure that the success will not be limited to only one generation



13. The knowledge and experience gained during the first round means that the process will be repeated more effectively and more quickly until final goals have been achieved
14. God is glorified, government's goals achieved, organised agriculture makes a difference, the previously disadvantaged are successfully established in agriculture, and food security is not threatened

Prayer:

- † Pray that the Lord will reveal a variety of practical, workable plans to His children in answer to their prayers. Pray that Christian agriculturalists will have the faith to obey God, because His plans may seem impossible and nonsensical to us.
- † Pray for good co-operation between all the role players, especially agriculture and government.
- † Pray for local farmers' societies and the role they should play in the land reform process.

As Christian agriculturalists, we believe that both government and agriculture should make important and unique contributions to land reform, but that each should have a limited responsibility. When they keep interfering in each other's territory instead of joining hands and working together, agriculture is exposed to unnecessary tension and conflict.



Finally

As Christian agriculturalists, we believe, based on the Word:

1. Transformation starts at a personal level. Agriculturalists must be saved, pardoned and made anew by Christ. They must become aware of their new identity in Him and live according to this new identity.
2. There is no one *super* land reform plan that will work for everyone. Our God is more creative and practical than that. There should be a variety of plans.
3. We should pray about land reform until we hear what God has to say. Then we *must* obey Him. Different local groups may pray together to hear what they should do together.
4. God works through people. We as Christian agriculturalists (each one of us) must submit ourselves completely to the Lord so that He can execute His plans for agricultural transformation and land reform through us. Every Christian agriculturalist *must* be involved in one way or another.
5. The right to land is important to God – both the protection and restoration thereof.
6. The role and involvement of God and Satan and people should be kept in mind throughout our search for solutions to the land problem. The problem should be used, fought and accepted simultaneously, and one-sided responses should be turned down.
7. God often gives His children instructions that do not make sense - things that are only possible if they **believe** that He can and wants to do miracles to make it possible for them to carry out His instructions. This could happen regarding land reform. Obedience to God demands child-like faith in Him.



8. The solution to many problems in agriculture lies in building close friendships between agriculturalists. Not selfish friendships with a view to personal gain, but relations in which agriculturalists serve and help each other to become the people God has ordained them to be.
9. Congregations and churches in rural areas should take the lead in restoring and building relationships between local congregations, different races, employers and employees, and between agriculturalists in general.
10. Knowledge and skills should be transferred to a new generation of agriculturalists before they are made responsible for making a success of an agricultural business, or putting agricultural land to productive use. We believe it is cruel, irresponsible and unfair to give someone the responsibility first, and then, when the harm has been done, to want to transfer knowledge and skills afterwards.
11. Where land reform is concerned, everyone who owns land should prayerfully consider giving a portion of, or shares in his/her land to people (especially fellow believers) who have the will and the ability to farm alone, or with him/her.
12. Things must be done in the proper sequence: First faith and obedience to God, and then calculations. Anything is possible for God. Therefore, we should not make our sums before we decide whether it makes sense to obey Him or not. We must obey Him in faith, and when we do our calculations afterwards, we will discover that nothing is impossible for Him.
13. Giving should be done in a responsible manner and the dangers of instant wealth should be avoided. Beneficiaries must first be empowered to receive responsibly and to use that which they receive for the purpose it has been given. *First knowledge in the head and then land and money in the hand.*
14. There is only one way to make the victory that Christ gained over the idol of greed effective in our lives: By doing the exact opposite, by GIVING. There is only one way of destroying the spirit of land grabbing in Africa: By giving land.



15. People who have been faithful in the little things should be chosen to be beneficiaries of agricultural land. Land reform is not a charitable business, but the creation of an opportunity for someone to become economically independent so that they can create job opportunities and contribute to food security.
16. We have been called to serve agriculture and the agricultural community in Africa to change the destiny and the image of Africa.
17. Both government and agriculture must make important and unique contributions to land reform, but each should stick to their own knitting. Agriculture is exposed to unnecessary tension and conflict when they keep interfering in each other's business instead of joining hands and working together.

As Christian agriculturalists, we admit and confess:

18. Apartheid and its discriminatory laws on the right to own land, made victims of everyone in one way or another. We admit and confess that this system and laws destroyed relationships, negated our Christian testimony, had a negative influence on many, caused a great deal of physical disruption, and a lot of emotional pain and suffering. As Christian agriculturalists that were divided by Apartheid, we sincerely ask for forgiveness from all who were wronged by what we did, but we also offer our unconditional forgiveness to all who wronged us. We set them free so that we can seek win-win solutions to our problems and build the kingdom of God in agriculture together.

As Christian agriculturalists:

19. We undertake not to take only our own interests into account, but also that which is in the interest of the Kingdom of God and the people of Africa.
20. We subject ourselves to the authority of government because we believe that God appointed government over us.
21. We accept our ongoing responsibility to pray for government and everyone in authority.
22. We declare ourselves willing to serve government with skilful, impartial and biblically responsible advice regarding agricultural matters.



23. We are willing to do everything in our power to restore and build all those relationships that have a direct influence on agriculture and the agricultural community.
24. We demand effective service delivery to agriculture and the agricultural community from government.
25. We expect insight and understanding regarding the unique nature of farming and the risks to which it is exposed.
26. We desire the support we need to ensure food security for South Africa and Africa, and that we will be free to provide in the food needs of Africa and South Africa without being manipulated by countries that export food.

Crown Financial Ministries has launched a series of six DVDs together with a guide, under the title ***God Provides***. Each DVD contains a short video clip (\pm 15 minutes) on the relevant Scripture, followed by some questions and discussion, and then by a short message of about 3 – 4 minutes. The contents of the series fits in well with the devotions for Day 31 – 37, and is suitable for small groups. Although the whole series is useful, you are encouraged to at least watch the two DVDs about Abraham (numbers 3 and 4).

To watch the the DVDs or to order them, please visit www.crown.org.za/GodProvides



Can we count on your support?

Christians are the salt of the earth and the light to the world. This responsibility cannot be performed under cover. Christ must be proclaimed boldly and openly to the world. Read Matthew 5:13-16 and 10:32-33. We must put our viewpoints clearly forward, also what Land Reform is concerned.

Besides prayer, the purpose of our Prayer Focus 2010 is to positively influence the discussion on Land Reform, and to equip believers to search for win-win solutions to this question. The discourse is thus going on, and the viewpoints formulated here, are not necessarily final, complete or comprehensive enough. You also have the opportunity to give your input.

If, however, you can identify yourselves in general with the contents of this Prayer Focus, and would like to support the summary of (temporary) viewpoints in conclusion, we would like to give you the opportunity to do so. Send a **SMS** with the following detail to **39133**:

Land + your name, surname, occupation, e-mail and post address.

Only your name and surname will be placed on our public list, NO other detail! AMOS undertake not to give your personal details to any one without your consent. Associations, church councils, institutions, unions and so forth are welcome to reply as a group.

If you are interested in participating in the AMOS debate about Land Reform and Agricultural Transformation, you can send your contribution to land@amosafrica.net Please keep contributions short - rather not more than 300 words. Please note that your contribution may be published on our website.

We would like to hear from you soon!





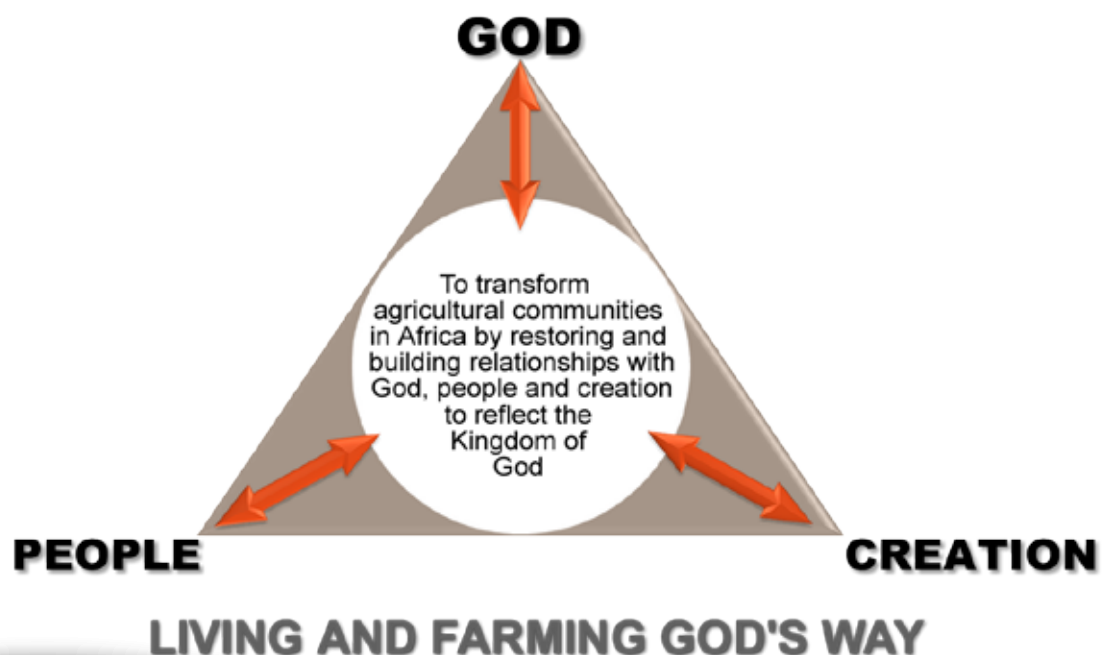
The name **AMOS** is derived from the Bible. Amos was a prophet and farmer of the Old Testament. As prophet, he warned against formalistic religiosity, and all kinds of exploitation and injustice of the day. Accordingly, God's children are encouraged not to be merely religious, but to live according to His will 24 hours of every day (24/7). The word **Agrimin** is an abbreviation for *Agricultural Ministries*.

AMOS' logo is rich in symbolism. The name is prominently printed. The windmill symbolizes agriculture. The windmill provides water and brings life and prosperity to the farm. We at **Amos** acknowledge Christ (red cross) as the source of Living Water (blue water issuing from the cross). He is the One without whom an abundant life is impossible. With this logo, we also acknowledge our dependence on the mighty working of the Holy Spirit, just like the windmill depends on the wind.


The core business of Amos Agrimin

We want to see the **Kingdom of God** manifested in the **agricultural community**.

Therefore Amos Agrimin's core business is:



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