

Christian Community

*'The Lord setteth the solitary in families
... but the rebellious dwell in a dry land'*



Tony Wiltshire

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... but the rebellious dwell in a dry land’

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To the Glory of God

“...Perhaps above all that they might see in this place the love of the LORD, because Jesus says, that’s what true evangelism is: because we have love one for another – then they might be able to see that we’re His disciples. That’s what I really long for!”

— Tony Wiltshire

John 13:34–35 ESV

¶ “A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE TO YOU, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER; AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, THAT YOU ALSO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

35 “BY THIS ALL WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.”

Matthew 25:31-46 NKJV

¶ “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

32 “All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

33 “And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 ‘for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;

36 ‘I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

37 “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?

38 ‘When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?’

39 ‘Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’

40 “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’

41 “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 ‘for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;

43 ‘I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

44 “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’

45 “Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’

46 “And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Isaiah 58:1-14 NKJV

¶ “Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins.

2 Yet they seek Me daily, And delight to know My ways, As a nation that did righteousness, And did not forsake the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; They take delight in approaching God.

3 ¶ ‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?’ “In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, And exploit all your labourers.

4 Indeed you fast for strife and debate, And to strike with the fist of wickedness. You will not fast as you do this day, To make your voice heard on high.

5 Is it a fast that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the LORD?

6 “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke?

7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?

8 ¶ Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’ “If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,

10 If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday.

11 The LORD will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

12 Those from among you Shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

13 ¶ “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the LORD honourable, And shall honour Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words,

14 Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

Introduction

The following article is a transcript of a tape recorded by TONY WILTSHIRE, some years ago in Wānaka, New Zealand, during May 1983.

Tony had been diagnosed as suffering from terminal cancer, and was requested by other Christians to make tape recordings on issues God had given him some understanding on.

Tony, his wife Kay, and their youngest daughter Rebecca were part of a Christian Community, which

the Lord had used Tony and Kay to start.

The Community both physically and spiritually, was built by God through the faithful responses of His servants. Kay survived Tony, and lived in Taradale, Napier, New Zealand. She has now passed on to be with the LORD as well.

On the tape from which this transcript was taken, Tony is just starting to speak on ideas of community and extended family. Tony starts

his talk by reflecting on what it means to him that he will soon be going on to glory, without having completed the total work which God gave him just to start; and now continues on to describe the ideas of *grace* which had inspired him, and which he saw as essential to any ministry.

Tony is not trying to lay down rules for Christian Community – he is setting out to inspire others by what God did in Wānaka – *Paul Norman*

Tony Wiltshire ...

“I think that there are certain key Scriptures which have been upon my heart for years. Psalm 68 verse six is one,

Psalms 68:6 KJV

The Lord setteth the solitary in families ... but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

... Isaiah 58 is another, ‘the fast’ that the Lord has chosen, and Matthew 25 – when the Lord comes in power, He’s coming to separate the sheep from the goats, and the sheep are those who have done His will: To those who are in prison, to those who are cast down, to those who are sick, those who are needing love, and to those who are lonely.

I think that every ministry of compassion must major on those two particular passages, **Isaiah 58** (see page 4) and **Matthew 25** (see page 3).

Every ministry of hospitality must centre on those to some extent. There are many other Scriptures, and I guess that some will come out as we go on from here.

I’ve seen Wānaka² as what I’m told its name really means, as a spiritual sanctuary. I’ve been promised that it is going to be filled with the glory of God. And in a sense I’ve also been told, through prophetic ministry, that our work here is already completed, and that there is a continuity assured because it was laid in God

It was, oh, a good three months ago now that the Lord showed me from 1 Corinthians (three), that we had laid a foundation and there were others who are going to build on that foundation. And I just want God to raise up those builders. I want it to be God who does that.

Paul says ...

1 Corinthians 3:7-11 KJV

So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are Gods husbandry, ye are Gods building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

I believe its time for us to believe God to bring somebody who can put a building on that foundation, which will fit the foundation which has been laid.

I am not saying this with any negativity regarding my own medical condition. Medically I could have many months left, I could have a matter of weeks left, I don’t know.

But God is bigger than the medical thing too.

In God I could have many many years left. I am not saying that this has to be tied up with my natural death. I was counselled and it was deemed prudent that I should make some provision for continuity of our ministry, so that is what I’m doing (making tapes).

God wants to set His solitary people in families

You see, that Scripture in Psalm 68, God wants to set His solitary people in families, has been very meaningful to me.

I believe that in the churches today there are many solitary people. I believe that in the world there are many solitary people. Lonely people, misfits, people who feel insecure. People who have been hurt by the miseries of contemporary life, broken marriages, psychiatric treatment, alcohol drugs, illegitimacies, sexual misconduct, all kinds of things; and these people need love.

And its God’s purpose that they should live in a family.

And somehow that family has to be a bigger thing than the Mum and Dad and a couple of kids that we have come to see as a family in our western civilisation.

Family is a group of people who are related, and our relationships could be bigger than just blood relationships, I’m convinced of it.

All related, and who live together and love one another, and mutually make each other feel secure and wanted, and at home.

One of the outcomes of our moving to Wānaka that has taken many years, has been that we've been living in extended family for some time.

In this case and at this stage, our extended family consists of basically the three of us (we have our youngest daughter Rebecca still with us, Kay and my self), Robert, Barbara and Clare (who the Lord wonderfully brought to work with us in this ministry), Evelyn (who's become the Grandma of the family, such a precious and loved person), Anne, Bruce, and David. That I think is ten at the moment.

And He's also given us the concept that the door to our home is an open door, if people want to come, they can come. And if people want to leave they can leave. A door that people can come to when they feel the need of love. A door that people can open when they feel the need of a rest or a holiday. A door that people can open when they just want friendship.

So if you like, the open house and the concept of extended family, or make it bigger if you like, community. And I think that God has got something bigger yet. Community is something which is deeply on my heart. I know that a lot of people won't agree with me, but I've seen lives change. Some people can't stand it, that's all right, they don't belong here. Other people say that it is idealism. I want to say that it works! I believe emphatically that it works.

And that if it is based on grace, and that is what its got to be based on, and if it is based on something that God has founded, if the foundation laid is Jesus Christ, then it must be right. I am not laying down a pattern for any body, I do not want to reproduce what we have done here, I wouldn't mind God reproducing it though. I do not want to write a text book on community, I do not want to write a text book on how to live together as extended family.

The Real Thing is Something of the Heart

I'VE FOUND THAT ANYTHING THAT'S GENERATED IN THE SPIRIT HAS TO BE RE-GENERATED IN THE SPIRIT, IT HAS TO BE RE-PRODUCED IN THE SPIRIT.

So often we make rules and we make laws, and we make standards, and once we reproduce them, they've become dead and sterile. Just like the Galatian church which started out in the Spirit and ended up in the flesh or living according to the Law.

I want this thing to be something real, and the real thing is something of the heart.

I know many people who've been interested in what we are doing here. I've even got people on my mind at the moment, who could be interested in what I'm saying here.

They'd be interested in either moving to Wānaka, or picking up a few seeds that I am sowing at this moment, to sow in their own lives, in their own places.

You see I am just so conscious of the fact that there are lonely people in the world. God didn't intend it that way, He intended that they should be set in families.

How far you carry this is up to you. But how far you go in God is up to you too. Unless our commitment is total, our discipleship won't be total. And I just want to say that commitment is something that really matters.

I am not a legalist, I'm a grace man. I don't believe that it is something which we have got to do by our own strength. I don't believe that it is something which we can do because we have made certain rules, and have been inflexible about our rules, I think that will destroy everything.

The key to me is in Acts chapter four verse 33, where it says,

Acts of the Apostles 4:33a KJV
With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ ..

And listen to this!

Acts of the Apostles 4:33b KJV
.. and great grace was upon them all.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid them down at the apostles feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

— Amazing situation. These people weren't motivated by the law that they had to sell any

of it. They weren't told that they had to give up everything and join the community, they weren't told anything of the sort.

But grace was operating. And before we can really operate the 'law' of community, we've got to operate the 'law' of grace.

And I believe that the 'law' of grace needs looking into, we'll have to have a look at that.

The 'Law' of Grace

WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE 'LAW' OF GRACE IS SOMETHING WHICH CAN ONLY COME BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

And grace is just such a marvellous thing. See—

grace is liberty,

grace is a giving thing,

grace begins with God,

grace is all—God's gift.

When God gives, He doesn't put a price tag on anything. You'll never run, at least I don't think you'll run, a true ministry if you're going to put a price tag on it.³ That's why we've decided in our community, nobody's going to have to pay board. We can believe God to look after those things.

You say, *well how do you run?*

Because great grace is available to us, that's all.

In our community we don't put a price tag on anything. We don't tell anybody they've got to sell up everything when you join us. We love them into it. And when they come, sometimes they get the message. Sometimes they don't.

Sometimes they are what the world would call bludgers. Sometimes they are what the world would call 'people who take advantage of us'.

But Jesus no where uses words like that. I just want to say that it is so important that if we are going to find out what community is like, what extended family is about, we are going to find that first of all, that **grace is FREE**.

Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me,

I once was lost and now I am found, was blind and now I see.

Grace, You and I

I'D LIKE TO SAY FURTHER ABOUT GRACE, THAT IT IS A GIFT OF GOD, BUT IT IS NOT ONLY GOD WHO EXERCISES GRACE. IT'S YOU AND I WHO ARE REQUIRED TO EXERCISE GRACE AS WELL. AND IT IS AVAILABLE TO US FREELY.

I have always believed that grace is given to us commensurate to our need. And I still believe that. And I believe that if a God Who didn't charge for my salvation, and a God Who didn't put a price tag on dying for my sin; put no price tag on eternal life; a God who gave His only begotten Son, freely – is available to live through me by grace; then, that such things as I can do for my fellow man, I can do by grace too, without charging them.

And I do believe that the key to liberty is grace. If we are going to charge board for the people who stay with us, then we are already in the realm of Law.

I've given you so much value, and hospitality, that it will cost you something – your money.

It's a double entry book keeping system. Because you have received from me, you owe me something. Somehow that is not ministry.

Somehow that's commerce. And I don't see it in the realm of extended family – in the realm of community, in the realm of bringing people into families, the solitary, the lonely, the seekers. We've just got to let them come, and we've got to give freely.

And Jesus says,

Luke 6:38 KJV "Give and it shall be given unto you. Good measure pressed down shaken together, running over shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you meet withal shall it be given unto you."

I just believe that we've got to learn that principle if we are going to learn what any kind of ministry is all about. Put a price tag on it, start charging for it, you can call it ministry if you like, but it isn't.

'Freely You Have Received, Freely Give'

YOU SAY: *Well how do you run?*

WELL, TO BE FREE TO GIVE, IS ALSO TO BE FREE TO RECEIVE.

Jesus said,

**Matthew 10:8b NKJV “FREELY YOU
HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE.”**

We're not above receiving donations, we never hint for them, we never suggest that would be a good idea.

Some people stay here who can afford to stay here, and some people like to give something when they leave. And according as it is designated as a gift it is used.

Sometimes they say it's for household expenses. And it goes into a household account. Sometimes its for whatever you feel to use it for. We accept it on that basis.

Sometimes its for the work here in Wānaka, and it goes into a church, a fellowship account.

But We Find That God Does Look After Us

WE DON'T HAVE TO CONSTANTLY ASK FOR OUR NEEDS, WE DON'T HAVE TO CONSTANTLY MAKE OUR REQUESTS KNOWN UNTO MAN. IN FACT WE DON'T USUALLY MAKE OUR REQUESTS KNOWN UNTO GOD VERY LONG.

If we are prepared to seek first His Kingdom, and His righteousness all these things He has promised shall be added unto us.

As a matter of testimony over many years, I want to say that they have all been. And it's an exciting way to live.

So my vision is that this vision should be somewhere, and I want it to reproduce. I want it to reproduce in the Body of Christ.

I want people to hear this tape sometime. Who'll they'll be I don't know. I'm not going to ram it down people's throats. If they want to know the answers I'll tell them the answers I've got.

This tape is not a 'how to' of community, its not a 'how to' of open homes, its not a set of how to tapes on the ministry of hospitality. I don't believe that God wrote 'how to' books, he wrote us. Paul said we could be His epistles, written in hearts, written by His Spirit in hearts.

I long that others should get the vision that God has given us. And I long that this thing won't die with Tony Wiltshire; that God's going to raise up somebody else, and many other people. In fact I would that my name could die. One of the tragedies is that in a sense we've started something which has caused us to be known.

I don't desire to be known, I'm quite happy to be a non-entity, provided that what God is doing is known and He is glorified. I want this to go on. And in a sense I've got a confidence that its going on. Its still small but it has touched many lives, and I want it to touch many more lives.

Travellers From North to East

YES WE HAVE AN OPEN HOME. WE HAVE AN OPEN HOME FOR TRAVELLERS.

Travelling is one of the most significant phenomena in the age in which we live. Travelling means that people are looking for something. Travelling shows that people aren't satisfied, they're restless they're looking for something they've never found.

Many of them wouldn't see it that way. But its true of most of them. Young people just travelling all around the world. Getting involved in all kinds of religious cults, predominantly eastern in origin. When the Bible has already told them that they need not look for it there.

Amos 8:11-13 KJV

¶ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:

12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.

13 In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.

Amos eight, I think its 11 to 13 are significant verses that talk of a drift from North to East of young people who are looking for the Word of the LORD. For many years there has been an overland drift from Europe to India (and Asia) in a south easterly direction. People looking to find the word of the LORD. People

looking for a reality, fellowship with a God they've never met. The day that they read their Bible, the Bible says that they're not going to find it there. It says that they shall not find it.

And I've learnt that having learnt something, they keep trekking, they keep searching. Sometimes by God's grace He brings them through Wānaka. And sometimes we meet them; and sometimes we are able to share the life of Jesus Christ with them. Maybe its not often received quickly, but Jesus says that that which goes into good ground, is going to bring forth in due time.

And it comes forth firstly the blade, then the ear then the full kernel on the ear. There's a process of sowing and harvest which we need to understand.

And sometimes those of us who are involved in sowing can get discouraged because we are not involved in very much harvesting. But the sowing has to be done if there is to be a harvest.

I believe that so much discouragement comes because we do not see results. And I believe that we are wrong because we are not living by faith, we are living by sight – when we look to our results for our encouragement. Praise the LORD!

I guess that I haven't been very specific about exactly what kind of life we live in this place. Well, I think that it is a very normal life, a very natural life. Its a life which is not governed by rules, but a life that's governed by warm relationships. I sometimes think that we've muddled through with God, because I say I can't give you rules. One man who wrote more than one book on community, was a French Canadian called Jean Vanier.

He said something like this,

*“If any one joins a community expecting to learn anything except **how to forgive**, they could be in for a big mistake.”*

Now I've probably over-quoted him there, but there is a truth in what he says.

Always Got to Be Ready to Say Sorry

ONE OF THE EXCITING THINGS ABOUT COMMUNITY IS THAT YOU'RE THROWN TOGETHER WITH A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO ARE

DIFFERENT FROM YOURSELF. AND SOMETIMES IT GRATES BECAUSE THEY DO “IT” IN A DIFFERENT WAY.

Sometimes it grates because they keep on making the same sort of joke. All kinds of things can get on your nerves, when you start living together with people. And its hard on you until you have learnt to forgive.

Somewhere there is in any community a sense where you've always got to **be ready to forgive**. And always got to **be ready to say sorry**. If there is one rule in a community, that's why I'd say to you at this moment:

‘—Its going to cost you something. Its going to cost you quite a lot. Its going to cost you yourself, but isn't that what discipleship does?’

If any man would come after Me,
Jesus says,

let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

Luke 9:23 NKJV

Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me”.

The cost of community is the cost of grace. For grace is a principle which means the giver pays the price, all of it.

Your salvation and my salvation was based on the fact that God paid the total price, and what a price – His only Son! Your salvation and my salvation came to us totally freely by grace. And if we are going to pick up this rule of grace and really a law of faith operating in us to receive that grace, then the law of grace must operate in us too.

There's a polarity here, where —

faith receives — grace gives

I believe that. Can you see what I mean when I say a polarity? Its almost as if a magnetic field is set up. I receive God's grace by faith and I start giving by grace.

But my giving by grace, is going to cost me everything. So that those with whom I live and those with whom I want to minister to, are going to receive freely. Knowing that the price has been paid for what they gain. And this is the very centre of a community spirit and a family spirit.

Community Life

But you say: *“what kind of life is this?”*

Well, its a very ordinary life for us. It just living together as a family.

But you say: *“You’re not a family”*.

You become a family as you live together.

“Some people go to work?”

Yes.

We normally have in this home the dentist Bruce who at the moment is not practicing his dentistry, due to medical reasons. He is intending, as far as we know, to go back to his dental practice here in Wānaka. We have Anne who takes in music pupils. We have Dave who’s working for the Domains Board.

Up until my illness, Robert was working doing painting and decorating with Jimmy another member of our fellowship.

As many as can, go out to work, bring in some sort of income, which is theirs to do with as they like. We don’t claim a percentage of it. We don’t claim anything of it.

It just enables us to give more. What we receive—enables us to give, we let them do what they want to with their money. We don’t ask them for money, but some how God always provides. Others of us have got different ministries.

At this moment I’m laid pretty low. I’m not doing anything very useful except making these tapes. I trust that this is useful. But I have been pretty fully occupied with the people that come here. There are a lot of people that come here who need love and counsel. A lot of people come who need comfort.

Kay and Barbara are busy people. Barbara does all the cooking for about five days a week. Kay does the rest. The house keeping is done by the ladies of the household. Evelyn does her bit as she is able. Anne does her little bit, and we appreciate everybody in this place.

So we live quite normally, you won’t find any roster on the wall. We don’t want this place degenerating into a prison or a ship, or a place of strong discipline. We want to engender through love, the discipline of the Holy Spirit.

Some people do more than others

You say: *“Some people do more than others”*.

Yes they do. It will always be that way, but that’s what tests our spirits. That’s what proves us, and that is where grace has to operate.

Sometimes we feel we are doing more than we ought. And the LORD reminds us just how much He did for us. You see grace means that we receive not according to what we deserve, God gives what we don’t deserve. That’s grace. The other side of it is mercy, where He doesn’t give us what we deserve:

Two sides of God’s love: grace and mercy.

So basically it works, we go on living.

We have an open door and at any moment we could have a hitch hiker outside. Or three or four from anywhere. From Japan, from South Africa. At any moment there could be a phone call, *“would you have a young man who’s been in hospital, who needs love?”*. At any moment there could be someone who rings up from a church, who says, *“look we’ve got somebody whose going through a difficult time who needs some love, would you have them with you?”*. And generally speaking we’ll say yes.

I know that there is a teaching which says: we should always seek the LORD about who we have, and I respect that teaching. But once the message of Matthew 25 has gripped your spirit, you tend to be more prone to say yes, than no. There are times when you receive a ‘check’ [*from God in your spirit*], times when I say, I’d like time to pray about this.

There are times I say I’d like to discuss this with my brother, who’s working with me in the ministry, and I’ll ring you back. But more often than not we’ll say we’ll have them. And by God’s grace we do. Sometimes, I think very often, people do come and get blessed. I’m not sure if its an ‘always’ thing. I’m not sure that we could say that everybody who comes to this place gets blessed – I’d like to say that!

Sometimes they go without any obvious outward change. On several occasions, they’ve come back again, and said that they would like to come back, would we have them again? And the second or may be the third visit, has been more fruitful than the first.

We have an open door for those who are lost and lonely, and we love them. Sometimes its almost more than they can take, when they first come here.

Young men who perhaps have been in a prison system. People from families where they've never known love. Its hard for them to take love at first. So they can't give it. Sometimes they shut up all together, and that's where we have to exercise love. Sometimes they burst into tears and say I want to go home. And sometimes they do go home. But we have to have an open door. Open for them to come and open for them to go.

See the trouble of bringing law and legalism into a community, is that it becomes a 'Jonesville' thing:

They are here because we've got them economically

They're here because they're afraid to go away—

The Life of the Early Church

—And that is a terrible travesty of the life of the early church, its a terrible travesty of **the life of the Holy Spirit**.

In the early Church they lived, I believe, very close together, because great grace was upon them. **And that grace had to operate through leadership.** There were people who did not understand that grace. Ananias and Sapphira thought they had to sell everything and had to give to the poor. They thought they had to give everything at the apostles feet.

And they told a lie and they were judged. They weren't judged because they kept something back, they were judged because they told a lie.

But that lie was generated in a wrong concept, in a legalistic concept. In a concept of: *If we join that lot it will cost us everything.* Well, I want to tell you that it will cost you as much as you want it to, to join our 'fellowship'. But you'll get as much out of it as you are prepared to put into it.

And that is what community is all about. These are just a few random thoughts on extended family. I want to go into something a bit bigger too. Because its on my heart to

see something bigger founded in this area, or in the Body of Christ. Something bigger than we've got so far.

See, all over the Body of Christ today, there are new expressions of community. There's one in Germany. There's one in Houston in Texas. There's Post Green in England which was the home of Sir Tom and Lady Lees, oh, there are so many ... There's L'abri, a very famous one in Switzerland, one in Sydney, I'm just naming a few as they come to mind quickly.

All over the body of Christ there are Christian Communities starting, which are all together different. They have all got the marks of originality. They all have the marks of something which is of the Spirit.

Our little thing here is a very small one. But I like to think its something God has started, it hasn't been a copy of anything else.

Because It Started With God

USUALLY WHEN A CHURCH STARTS TO COPY, IT LOOSES SOMETHING. WHEN A CHURCH STARTS TO COPY, IT HAS TO MAKE RULES BECAUSE THERE'S NO OTHER WAY OF COPYING.

But God has shown us that only that which is founded in the Spirit of God and birthed in the Spirit can really live, and can grow, and can reproduce.

So while I acknowledge precious fellowship with Christians who, live in community all over the world and we meet a lot of them here. Exciting ideas, exciting concepts, exciting ways of doing it. (There was a French Canadian who founded one named L'ARCHE, the Ark, in France. Just for handicapped people.) So each community has its own purpose, *raison d'etre*. Each community has its own flavour. Because it started with God. L'abri's is a ministry to intellectuals.

The one that started in downtown Houston was a "high" Anglican company. The Church of the Redeemer was an inner city thing, it was to meet the needs of an inner city which was vast and desolate of spiritual life.

Here in Wānaka we see that our community is to meet the needs of the lonely, the seekers, the hurt, and so if you like to fulfil our own lives.

'God Setteth the Solitary in Families ... the Rebellious Dwell in a Dry Land'

Psalms 68:6 NKJV God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; But the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

God is almost comparing family life on one side, with rebellion on the other, and with dryness. I think I agree that that is how God sees it.

You see I believe in a lot of churches today there are a lot of lonely people. There's nothing wrong with the churches, its just that these people are lonely. They enjoy the services, they join in the worship, they make their contribution helping in the activities of the church, and they go home to their lonely flats. They go home to their situations where they just don't feel loved, they don't feel wanted and there they remain until the next church meeting. I believe that's something we've got to watch.

Some How That Makes Extended Family So Real

{Ring Ring (telephone)}

You would have heard that I broke off then because of a telephone call.

I'll tell you about that telephone call. It was from a girl in Whangarei who used to live in our family, for I don't know how long now, I think she was with us for seven months. She lived with our fellowship here in Wānaka for longer. She was so close to us that she looks upon us as a second home. She's in a Bible School in Whangarei. Since she heard I was sick her principal said to her, *you must go home*'. The students got together to have a collection to pay for her fare. She just rang to say how excited she was to be coming 'home' just to be with me.

She's not a blood relation. She's family, the family of God. I know the family of God is the church of Jesus Christ. But somehow she sees that this place is in a very real sense her home, and she's coming home at this time. I just thought I'd share this with you because that's what extended family could mean to

some people.

I remember when she first walked in here. She was shy. She was unsure of herself. She thought she'd never stand it. She'd rung me up (she'd known us once when she was a little girl). She'd known us and she rang us up, *'could she come and stay here, because she was going to be a dental nurse here'*. I think that first week was very hard for her. But she is so excited she is coming home now to be with us at this time.

Some how that makes extended family so real.

Back to Talking About Loneliness

SO THIS LONELINESS IS SOMETHING WHICH I BELIEVE WE CAN MEET IN EXTENDED FAMILIES. I want to tell you something else, its that the Jews have found an answer for it in the Kibbutzim.

In the Kibbutzim of Israel they live together as large families. Of course they are much bigger, well most of them are much bigger than what we are thinking of here. But that thing was created in God's earthly people. It was raised in God's earthly people to meet a very real need. It was raised up because there were people coming out of pogroms and putsches, coming out of countries where they were persecuted and where their families had been destroyed.

These people were resettling the land of Israel and knew nothing of the language of Israel, very often knew nothing of the culture, except that they themselves were Jews. They knew nothing about how to handle the new situation, and they formed together to make extended families called Kibbutzim, and they worked.

The history of Israel could never be what it is today without the Kibbutzim of Israel, today I'm sure any Jew would tell you that. Only a small proportion of Israel's population actually live in Kibbutzim, but those who do have made a valuable contribution to their country.

I just want to say, first the natural, then the spiritual. I believe this is true of natural Israel. Can we not see this is God's concept for us. That we should take in the stranger, that we

should make provision for the one who hasn't, – because **we have**.

Can we not see there is a principal here which we can really latch onto. I don't say we have to do it by becoming consciously Kibbutzim.

But I'm saying its of the heart. I believe its just so much of the heart at this time, of God's heart, that we should get together and recognise that there are lonely ones in our midst.

A Community

There's a piece of land now I'd love to show to anyone who is interested. There is a piece of land not a half a mile from here, God has laid it upon my heart in a most miraculous way.

May be I'll tell you that story on another tape for any one whose interested. For God has shown us that that land is to be developed to the glory of His Name.

And as I have sought God, God has brought this concept to my mind, of a Kibbutz – a community.

A community where a number of small committed families, western type families live together in perhaps a lower lifestyle than they normally do in our society.

I see it almost developed as a series of almost glorified motels. Little places where there is an adequacy for small families to live together and each of them to take in maybe one or two others who are lonely, people who've come from difficult situations.

I see this land developed, and its a beautiful piece of land, with a few small homes like this and with a central place for eating, not necessarily breakfast, I think each home could have their breakfast on their own. Perhaps coming together twice a day for meals.

Extended Family

A CENTRAL PLACE WHERE THEY CAN COME TOGETHER FOR RECREATION, FOR WORSHIP, AND TO BE TOGETHER. AND A COMMON MEANS OF INCOME.

Maybe a piece of land that could be cultivated, agriculture, light industry. So they are all putting their resources into one

common interest, and growing together as they work together and live together and eat together. I believe that there is room for a Christian school in that setting.

If you let it, your mind could run riot at the possibilities. None of the people being paid directly, but just knowing there is a common fund. The proceeds of what's produced should support them all as a family, so that nobody has anything 'uncommon' and nobody lacks anything.

Now that is going to require grace. It is going to require commitment. It is going to require people who are prepared to give things up. But I'll tell what, its going to afford joy.

Architecture Important

I have a dear friend who's name is Ron Graham, a young architect who did a thesis for his degree on Christian Community, and I can never forget some of the things in that thesis which really attracted me.

The first thing was something I've always believed was important, and that is a common table. A table where you can just sit around and just be family, where you can eat together.

You see in the New Testament, fellowship and communion and feeding together, are all the same concept.

We have our communion around a table, the LORD's table. And that means we fellowship there in the greatest depth that Christians ever can. So fellowship and the table. – The table is a central thing to a community.

But Ron Graham has gone further than that, he's added the hearth. That is he's added a place of warmth. He's added a place where we can all be warm together.

So I believe that the thing that we have here in the form of an extended family is something which God wants to develop.

I would love to be able to live to see – ah how can I say it, if I say a Christian Kibbutz it'll almost be more than I really mean.

A community built on that basis. Where all of us are contributing to a common source of income and all of us are receiving from the income that is earned in the way. I believe that

is a possibility. I believe its an exciting thought.

And I believe what God has revealed to natural Israel, he could reveal to His people of spiritual Israel.

I don't yet see we're in a place where we see people who are lonely through persecution so much, but they are lonely all the same. I don't see people who are coming out of Russia, or people coming out of many many countries destroyed by political power, but I see them destroyed by demonic power around us in our society. These people need a large family, a Kibbutz if you like.

I've shared these thoughts of a larger community than we now have because I believe there is a principal of God involved here. **And the principal is that each generation should go further than the previous generation.** I believe this is God's purpose for us. I believe its so often been ignored.

God Wants Every Generation to Go Further

We tend to look back to see our Godly fathers, and don't go as far our selves. Its not God's way, God's way is that every generation should go further in God than the generation before. God's way is that after Elijah there should be an Elisha with a double portion of the same Spirit. God's way is that after a David should be the glory of a Solomon kingdom. That John the Baptist should decrease so that Jesus might increase. God's way is the transition from one generation to the other, from one leadership to another, should be always on an expending level. I don't glorify bigness for the sake of bigness, but I believe God has given us some principles.

I long to see, I long to feel, I long to believe that they're truly established, because there are men and women established to carry them through.

God sees a change of generation or a change of leadership as a Moses to a Joshua, 'Joshua' is always to go further with Him, and I want this to happen. God wants my children, my spiritual children as well as my natural children, to go further in God than I've ever been.

So often we tend to look back, we see our own fathers and say what Godly men they were, we don't go as far as God would have us. I don't believe that's God's way. **I do believe God wants every generation to go further.**

Psalms 127:1-5 NKJV

¶ *A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon.* Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.

2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep.

3 Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.

4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth.

5 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

Psalm 127, here children are described as arrows in a quiver, and extension of our life shooting forth of our own life, and I'm sharing this 'the concept of community' with people who are interested because I see them as an extension of my own life and ministry.

Nothing would thrill me more than this tape doing something for some of you who will get something of my vision for this land. But while we are talking about community, what I said about Kibbutzim might sound as though it was an in-turning thing. Its not meant to be that way. There's got to be that they can take in people from outside all the time.

It's got to be that they can reach out to people on the outside all the time. I long that the people that we take into our home can get blessing at their own home and that they can carry something of the blessing that they received here. **That's outreach!**

Perhaps above all that they might see in this place the love of the LORD, because Jesus says, that's what true evangelism is: because we have love one for another – then they might be able to see that we're His disciples. That's what I really long for!

God Bless! ”

— Tony Wiltshire

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Amos	Acts	Philippians
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Notes

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2 *Wānaka* – South Island, New Zealand Māori language (Kai Tahu) for *whare wananga* house for spiritual instruction c.f. A Dictionary of the Māori Language Herbert W. Williams M.A. 7th Edition (1971). For genreal informatoin see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wanaka>

3 Also as people grow in Christ to learn the grace and duties of giving and support: **Luke 10:7 Galatians 6:6 1 Timothy 5:17–18 1 Corinthians 9:3–14 2 Corinthians 9:5 Acts of the Apostles 20:35 Philippians 4:16 ...**

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ESV

English Standard Bible

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KJV

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