

PLAIN TRUTH®

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION®

2018...Setting Our Sights On the Horizon

By Greg Albrecht

The need for the Christ-centered, grace-based ministry of CWR/PTM is as great as it ever has been! The need is NOW! We can't wait for tomorrow—the hunger for the grace of God is staggering, the darkness of religious captivity is horrendous and the cries from slaves of legalistic religion, who desperately need freedom in Christ, is deafening! Can you see? Can you hear?

The words of Jesus to his disciples ring true to us in this New Year of 2018: *Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest* (John 4:35).

We have closed the books on 2017, and now we **set our sights on the horizon** of our collective ministry, looking forward to serving Jesus Christ in the months ahead of us. Many of you are such

gracious and generous supporters—thank you so very much!

Supporting Our Collective Mission

As we look forward into 2018 together, we not only anticipate serving old friends—we also look forward to sharing the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with many new friends all over this world! But as we anticipate serving more people, we must also plan for more expenditures.

Paul exhorts us, *The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For Scripture says, "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages"* (1 Timothy 5:17-18).

Paul encourages and admonishes support for elders who *direct the affairs of the church well*. This is no blanket, all encompassing, absolute directive about a requirement to

give and donate. In keeping with all New Testament teaching about giving, Paul does not demand "tithing." As Christ-followers, we make our own decision about how and when we give, and as we do, we are motivated by the mind of Christ and transformed hearts, not "reluctantly or under compulsion" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

With the word "**well**" in 1 Timothy 5:17, Paul introduces the thought that *our giving can and perhaps should be careful, selective and dependent upon how Christ-centered and grace-based a ministry or church might be*. What a particular spiritual entity might have represented to us in the past is not in view here—whether we were baptized or married in a particular building, or whether our grandparents were members of a church or part of a ministry—is not relevant to Paul's encouragement about giving. Paul is not talking about supporting a social club where people feel comfortable because everyone has similar past memories and interests. He is talking about supporting a meaningful and relevant, Christ-centered ministry or church.

Wise and Informed Choices

Based on Paul's qualification of "**well**," *we can then safely assume that we should make wise and*

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informed choices in our giving—if we believe a ministry is doing a good job proclaiming the kingdom of God and the King of the kingdom, then we want that ministry to thrive. We don't want that ministry or church to close its doors. Perhaps I am somewhat biased as I lead CWR/PTM, but it seems to me that is part of what Paul is saying as he cites the principle iterated in Deuteronomy 25:4—"do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain."

In biblical times, ears of corn were spread on a threshing floor and oxen were then walked around a pivot in the center. As the oxen walked in circles, their hooves separated the grain from the husk, thus the oxen "treaded out the grain."

Let's keep the "ox" healthy, well nourished and able to continue its work, in the case of CWR/PTM, of proclaiming *The Jesus Way*—keeping our focus on *faith alone, grace alone and Christ alone*. Let's do our part to help the "ox" proclaim *all Jesus all the time!*

The elders who direct, teach, preach and encourage a grace-based, Christ-centered path, who serve Jesus in keeping our eyes on our Chief Shepherd, are worthy Paul says, "of double honor" (1 Timothy 5:17). I don't take this to mean that elders should receive paychecks that enable them to live a life of luxury—I take the sense of Paul's teaching to speak of the quality of the Christ-centered ministry they provide.

Preaching and teaching *well* is worthy of double honor because Christ-centered guidance sets the good ship *Christianity* (and all on board) on course in the right direction.

Preaching and teaching *well* is worthy of double honor because the good ship *Christianity* needs course corrections so it doesn't run onto the rocks or hit an iceberg, spiritually speaking.

If you believe that the ongoing and



If you believe the ongoing ministries of CWR/PTM are providing and broadcasting the Bread of life to people all over this world, and doing it well, then help us continue this work!

combined ministries of CWR/PTM, with all the resources we freely provide, are desperately needed in this world, then please do what you can to support us. If you feel our combined efforts, which of course include the many expenses we have in this worldwide media ministry, are important and vital in our world today, then **please open up your heart and your checkbook.**

If you believe that CWR/PTM is "treading out" Christ-centered, grace-based grain (indeed the Bread of Life) that feeds people all over this world in the name of Jesus, then please help that "ox" keep up its work.

If you believe the ongoing ministries of CWR/PTM are publishing, providing and broadcasting the Bread of life to people all over this world, and doing it *well*, then help us continue this work!

My Request

Please give thoughtful and prayerful consideration to

- 1) continue giving, if you already are;
- 2) increase your giving, in amount and consistency, if you are able;
- 3) start giving if you have not already done so.

My dear friends,

• on behalf of all those to whom we minister, all over this world—

• on behalf of many who will never be able to give one penny to financially support our efforts, given where they live and/or the depressed economic situation that is part of their lives—

• on behalf of all those whose only contact with us is electronic—as print and postage costs prohibit us from sending printed hard copies of our resources around the world indiscriminately—

• on behalf of all those new readers and listeners we constantly hear from, who tell us our collective efforts and generous giving in the name of Jesus are helping to change and transform their lives, **don't muzzle the ox.** These new readers and listeners are indeed part of *the fields that are ripe for harvest!*

Join us as friends, partners and ambassadors of the kingdom of God—help, give, pray and contribute as you can—as Jesus inspires and moves you.

Help us help others! Pass along the grace God has given you, and as the light of Jesus shines within you, help us reflect that light in dark places all over this world!

Thank you—from the bottom of my heart,

Greg Albrecht