

# Sleepless Before Seattle

September 4, 2005

***"When [Paul] came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles... so Paul stayed with them..." Acts 9:26-28***

The Seattle Leadership Conference is only a few days away! God must be planning **"something in [those] days that [we] would never believe, even if someone told [us]"**, (Acts 13:41) because Satan is furiously attacking so many of us. Sadly in this "age of letters" a new memo, bulletin article or "open letter" often comes up on our various websites seemingly attacking brothers instead of exposing Satan's schemes. Most agree that our fellowship's disunity has caused each of us many sleepless nights.

Let me begin by praising the LA Elders and Evangelists for their recent letter to all the churches entitled, **"Call To Brotherhood Unity And Revival."** (August 28, 2005) This letter is a humble call for discipling congregations around the world to join together in a worldwide revival. The Portland Church has gladly joined the LA Church because we fully agree with the accompanying **"Statement of Unified Brotherhood."** At our Jubilee in Portland just two weeks ago, I was very moved and honored to be invited to a Saturday afternoon meeting with Al Baird, Bruce Williams, Steve Johnson, Doug Arthur, John Louis, and Mike Fontenot (all speakers at Portland) to "as a team" discuss how this "Statement" of "core beliefs," all of us have held so dear for many years, might be worded. I so appreciate their incorporating my suggestion made in my Friday night speech for a Brotherhood Day of Prayer and Fasting for Unity. The LA leaders are suggesting Friday, October 7, 2005.

I fully realize that much of the turmoil of the past years was caused by my leadership sins and shortcomings, or a bitter reaction to them. I hope and pray that brothers will extend forgiveness for my sins that hurt them and mercy so I may be a part of a rebuilding team to gather the churches into a brotherhood that could evangelize the world in the 21st century. I fully understand that Biblically to receive forgiveness, I must extend to those that hurt me this unique Christian grace. These past few years have been extremely difficult. Through Christ, I too must conquer my "bruised ego," "my over-defensiveness for my ministry" and then extend respect and forgiveness to those with whom I presently have disagreements.

Last week I received a phone call from my friend Mike Taliaferro. He asked several pointed questions concerning my article **"The Portland Story."** I realize from that conversation what I wrote could be misunderstood by even my friends. To give Mike a background for my thoughts, I shared with Mike about all the calls from weak, hurting disciples received weekly. We simply want to help these wounded souls as well as to be arm-in-arm with all who desire revival in our churches and to see the world evangelized. I then shared with him my admiration for his "faith and guts" in God's work in San Antonio as well as his life-long work in Africa. I felt much closer to Mike after our conversation. How awesome it will be for us all to be in Seattle to talk face to face! These heartfelt interactions are such a "balm" for hurting relationships. Tragically, many of us leaders have some relationships still strained or separated by **"fear"** with other leaders. Therefore, let me suggest the need of the hour are "Barnabases" who are willing to be bridges between brothers to override fear thus reconciling a **"Paul to the apostles."** (Acts 9:26-28)

Let us not forget the angel's words to "General Joshua" when Joshua asked **"Are you for us or for our enemies?"** The angel answered, **"Neither, but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come."** Then Joshua humbly fell on his face in reverence and said, **"What message does my Lord have for his servant?"** If all of us in Seattle "sign-up" to be "on the Lord's side" and ask "what message does God have for me his servant?" then God may well do the humanly impossible and unify all discipling ministries through His atoning blood shed on the cross! Then the Scriptures will prove true, **"God grants sleep to those He loves."** (Psalm 127:2)

Kip McKean

### **Elders-In-Training Response to Sleepless in Seattle**

It has been an exciting ride these past two years here in Portland, Oregon! We too commend the L.A. Church and their decision to introduce a vehicle to assist in helping churches to return to the standard of the Bible. We are so grateful for all the ways God has allowed the two of us to not only serve the congregation here in Portland, but also help others from different towns, cities, states, and countries. Hardly a day that goes by without a call from a brother or leader in another congregation asking for help and wanting to come visit Portland. Every week there are at least ten people visiting to "see" the Portland Church. God is being glorified through the efforts of all the brothers and sisters here in Portland who have not only made it their goal to please God through seeking and saving the lost, but also have worked hard to help the saved stay that way! It is also a pleasure to work as gospel partners in the Lord with the other House Church Leaders and the McKeans. Each individual in this team leadership group has genuinely laid down their lives for both disciples and non-Christian friends in so many ways. Through God using the unwavering faith and church builder expertise of Kip and Elena, we definitely have developed and forged a strong leadership group here full of mutual respect, cooperation and love between all of us. Perhaps our most special time of the week is our discipling partner time on Sunday evenings. The Bertalots, Untalans, and McKeans all get discipling, both correction and encouragement from each other! We are truly best friends. Pray for God to unify the churches so this lost world will be won for Christ!

Bob Bertalot & Tony Untalan  
Elders in Training