

Renewed, Refreshed and Restored

Psalm 81:5-7

I heard an unknown voice say: "I removed the burden from their shoulders; their hands were set free from the pots. In your distress you called and I rescued you, I answered you out of a thundercloud;

Some years later I was doing research on unreached people groups. I was compiling the information and sharing it with a friend that lived across the country. Together we had written and compiled over 2000 profiles of people who have never heard the Gospel. This was my burden and my concern. This was my way of continuing my missions calling while serving in the States.

A few years before this I had started an unofficial website for the Christian and Missionary Alliance. They recognized its value and gave me permission to continue doing it.

One of the things I did with my own website was to do teach online. I had online Bible studies on the *Life of Christ* which were conducted like a real classroom situation. We had quizzes and tests and I asked people to write papers and dialogue with each other over the subject matter. I did the basic lectures in print format then the students would gather together online through *instant messenger* to discuss the material we were studying. It was quite an extensive program of teaching and training people about the *Life of Christ*. I did this for several years having anywhere from 10 to 20 students in each semester. It was enjoyable to be doing something outside of pastoral ministry.

As I developed the unofficial website for the Christian and Missionary Alliance I had opportunities to visit the Alliance headquarters in Colorado Springs to get more information about unreached people groups. On one particular visit I carried the 10 discs of unreached people with me. A friend of mine who worked at the national office knew some of the leaders of other missions organizations focused on unreached people groups. Together we went to visit them. I told them that we had 2000 profiles of unreached people groups. They were astounded and said that was amazing and admitted they did not have access to any resource like that. They asked if it was possible to buy them and where they could get those 2000 profiles. I said, "I'm so glad you asked. I brought them with me. They are not for sale but we will give them to you freely, just be sure to credit my friend and me as the authors of this material.

On one of my visits to another mission organization the young man said it was amazing material that needed to get out where missionaries could access it. He suggested putting the profiles on the Internet. Of course I was familiar with the

Internet because I was doing it on the website for the C&MA, but I didn't know how to upload a database of this size. He said he could take these 2000 profiles and get them organized, indexed and placed on the Internet making them available to everyone.

I gave him the 2000 profiles and within 24 hours he had it ready. He put it on a website and I linked it to our Christian and Missionary Alliance website. What a wonderful privilege that was to be involved in reaching the unreached with all these profiles.

That is not the end of this story. We were serving as pastor in a very difficult community for five years. I was under a great deal of stress, so much so that I wanted to quit ministry. I prayed and told the Lord I needed to take a year off. I needed a sabbatical. I needed to go away for a year or even two years to get rested up. I was so burned out I even hated to look at churches when we travelled. I began to pray for the Lord to find a way for me to get out of pastoral ministry. I told the Lord I was willing to work a secular job, I'd even drive a school bus, but I needed rest.

About that time I got a phone call from the national office of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. They had been aware of my unofficial Alliance website. It had a lot of information and many people were finding it a rich resource of information about the Christian and Missionary Alliance. They had received a phone call from someone who had been on my website and wanted to make a donation to the Christian and Missionary Alliance. They made a sizable donation to the denomination. Our headquarters was calling me to tell me they were going to be starting the denomination's own website and they wanted to know if I would consider being their webmaster. They asked me to come to Colorado Springs and interview for this job.

All of this was a shock to me because I'm not a trained webmaster. I was self taught. Everything I knew about computers I learned by the seat of my pants. I studied computer programming and learned basic programming on my own. I even had my own newsletter that was circulated in the United States and in Britain for the particular computer that I was using. I was a self-taught person and competing for this job against IT professionals, guys that were trained to do this kind of work.

We went to Colorado Springs to have an interview for the job of webmaster. We had our lengthy interview with the director of communications. The president of the Christian Missionary Alliance came in and sat with me and talked to me about the unreached people groups and about the website, what I might do and how I could help them with this project. In the end I was offered the job. However, they

offered me about \$10,000 less than I was making in my ministry. I told him what I was making and that I wasn't willing to earn less, but if they could match my income I would consider being the webmaster. The boss talked about it, looked at his figures, and came back to me and said, "We will do it. We will match your current salary if you would come and be our webmaster."

I was thrilled. For me it was a miracle that they offered me. This job was an answer to my prayer. It got me out of pastoral ministries for the two years that I would spend at Colorado Springs. It was yet another way God provided for me in a time of great need. He was restoring me.