

## His Thoughts vs. Ours

**The radical nature of Christianity is becoming more apparent to me as time goes by. It is my hope and prayer that this recognition is the work of God pressing my mind into the shape of the mind of Christ as the years go by.**

**He has said that His thoughts and ours are not the same. It is amazing how, in spite of that teaching we so often think God is like us in His opinions and positions.** He keeps sounding pretty American and a very successful evangelical in His ways. Traveling to third world countries and dialoguing with their occupants has opened my eyes a bit more to who this God really is. Frankly, He is quite different from anyone we have ever known.

**So much of our culture is about achievement and success and the accumulation of material wealth.** We are awed by mega-churches, and we buy books that tell us how to succeed. We are hungry to be progressive, to get higher, have more, increase our numbers, and achieve yet another level.

**Yet, the One whose name we bear often seems to be going in the opposite direction. In fact, He seems almost regressive. He goes back to gather up the lost things, those which have been left behind.** HE came to *“seek and to save that which was lost.”* His anointing was for the poor, the captive, the blind, the broken-hearted, and the bruised. The Messiah was anointed for weakness, slowness, disease, suffering, and death.

**Jesus’ work and words are not for strong souls. His message is for the weak. He, who lived in glory, regresses to earth.** He, who was omnipotent, regresses to a human body. He goes back, He goes down, and He becomes small. By our standards of success, even those adopted by much of the American church, Jesus would surely be deemed a failure.

**There are those who follow Him in His regressions.** There are grandmothers raising grandchildren in our inner cities because the parents of those babies have died of AIDS. There are women walking alone into the barrios of the Dominican Republic to carry hope and life to those who get water only on Tuesdays and Saturdays. There are pastors in Brazil living in villages where all the men are alcoholics and batterers, and all the children are sexually abused. There are men and women in Burma who daily go into the projects where there is no clean water or sanitation to care for those dying of AIDS and to teach skills to girls who are in danger of being trafficked.

There is a family in Swaziland who, at great sacrifice, cares for the disabled children who were thrown out on the trash heap because they were considered unfit to

live. There are no wheelchairs, no medications, no safe restraints, and little food. These are people who follow the King who goes back.

**What would it look like if the Church of Jesus Christ in the wealthiest county in the world followed Him backwards?** What might happen to the ghettos and deadly streets of our great and wealthy cities? What might be accomplished in the lives of our inner-city children who are not read to and often do not have sufficient books and supplies in their schools?

Globally, what might be done for the persecuted church that is filled with murdered brothers and tortured sisters with whom we will spend eternity? How might the Church around the world be strengthened and resourced to deal with the massive problem of trafficked women and girls from the very neighborhoods in which they worship? **What could happen if we got down on our knees and asked God to teach us how to go backwards? To stoop down? To become small?**

I do not know the answer to such questions in full, but I do know them in part. I know that barren parts of this dark world would begin to fill up with the glory of God. I know that joy would flit across the face of a suffering child. **I know that the Church of Christ would look more like the bride of Christ, and would function more like the soldier she is called to be.**

**I also know that you and I would be radically changed, for we would look more and more like the backwards and glorious Savior whose name we bear. We would be marked by love rather than success.** We would be known as those who bend down, slow down, and reach down, just like the God who sits high and lifted up is now known for such things. We would be anointed to care for the weakness, slowness, disease, suffering, and death. We would truly be enabled to *“do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.”*

Does this sound like wishful thinking, a muse without a map? Is this merely a dream without a real hope? Not if we individually and collectively begin to ask God to make it happen. I believe He would answer such a prayer, because I believe we would be praying in line with His thought, instead of ours. Oh, may it be so. And may it start today.

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