

Miktar Lamed (Letter 12)

Dear Reader,

Human beings were created for fellowship. We know the Biblical dilemma of the loneliness of the first human, and yet we limit our interactions and cut ties as if we are self-sufficient. This can never be. We need each other and better we learn it sooner than when it is too late.

This newsletter revisits the quest for unity. The one body, many members illustration under girds all the subsections. May we strive to restore the bonds that are broken, may we protect the vulnerable members, and may we respect, encourage and heal each other so that we all together can attain the victory.

Blessed is the one who takes the time to read this newsletter.

1. Walking in the light

And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one (Joh 17:11).

One Body many members

We pride ourselves of the concept Ubuntu. We hold up her principles to the Western world and say this is the yardstick, but unbuntu like the Ten Commandments constantly show us a mirror of how far we fall short.

Individualism that equals selfishness destroys all possibilities of relationships and mutual growth. Jesus' prayer for unity wanted to create a support system that


constantly care and reach out to one another. Instead of having to fear and protect your own self interests, the other members of the body will rally around you and intervene on your behalf, alleviating all threats and creating a framework in the first place where distrust has no place.

Here to in the previous verses, Jesus has set the example of humility when HE washed the disciples' feet so that they could be in relation with Him. O, that they may be one, that we can be one; that we have friends, brothers and sisters who genuinely care for another, who will support others in time of need. Life and reality indicate that we are living in a fool's paradise if we are dreaming and thinking that we will be one, where all members form one Body in Christ. Still, let us be dreamers and even if we are frequently shocked and disappointed in fellow members who let us down, let us persevere and strive to do our bit irrespective of the rest.

2 What shall we say about all these?

{Reflections on the current national and international news events will be mirrored by/in the Word of God to console, direct and challenge (where needed).}

Congratulating fellow South Africans on Freedom Day for 16 years of democracy results in divergent reactions. These can be linked to the three emotional reactions apathy, sympathy and empathy. Some citizens cannot care less about Freedom Day and the only pleasure around the day, is to be out of the daily traffic rush and sleep a little late -so welcome with the chilly winter approaching.



Unfortunately, not all workers are even afforded this as instead of getting the needed break, major businesses are running special campaigns on the day to boost their sales and the workers are at the brunt of this hype. The bottom line of the apathy group is: no interest, no effort to support the day, no concern about the emphases of politicians or related groups, it is futile.

Sympathy for the relevance of Freedom Day come with some awareness, some curiosity for the great and grave undertakings and challenges which resulted in the proclamation of the day. Sixteen years later however it takes effort to be looking for the silver lining, it takes scratching through the ash for something imperishable that is of value. And yet the searching do result in lone stars in the thick darkness of the growing rift between haves and have nots. The legacy of Apartheid policies is understood and yet there are forces at play that counteract the healing of these consequences and rift.

Empathy is the emotion of those who came from the great tribulation, who could wash off the blood, the tears, stop the running and the roaming, to be able to settle down at the homestead again free of fear and persecution. O the bliss that they can be with their family, can share with their loved ones; can keep their children to the breast. It was worth the effort and that is paramount and far and wide this message must be spread that freedom has come and the fruits are visible.

Well amidst all the emotions, I will take the middle road and state that we have not yet succeeded in creating a new nation; the rifts are still around (and unfortunately deepening). It is not true that we have not tasted freedom. It is around us all now to such an extent that we abuse it now. Thus, Freedom Day, whether we ignore it or not, reminds us that we are in it together, for just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though

many, are one body(1 Cor 12:12). What we contribute, we contribute ultimately to the Body, what we withhold ultimately is a defect in the Body.

There is no difference between my spiritual life and physical engagement. We cannot separate the two. My purpose in life, my creation was designed towards the “other” and I need to live to glorify my Creator by fulfilling my relations to the rest of creation.

3. Joy with the sorrow.

On Sunday 25 April (Jubilate Sunday) the heart of the old Captain Johannes (Dunkie) Kraalshoek, (regional) Father of the Gricqua nation and Chairperson of the Bethanie congregation, was beaming with joy when the mission station was invaded by the Bloemfontein East parish. Braaivleis fires from early in the morning mixed with the incense of prayer later when the worshippers turned their hearts to God in thanksgiving. The heavens resounded when choir after choir took the stage and swayed the congregations along. The message by Pastor Peter Arendt was a clarion call, gentle and yet urgent: consider Jesus! For long the minds and hearts of the parish will remember: you can try to let go of Jesus, but HE will not let go of you! Long live the efforts of the pioneers who planted this church. May God sustain her and give her growth!

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To those whose heart mourn today

"What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand."

Joh.13:7

Jesus is in charge and He cares for you, even during this dry spell where understanding is so limited. Just trust Him and allow Him to lead the WAY.

4. Chess (nee Church) moves: Bishop

{All the movements of the Bishop (and deans), where they sow, plant, water will be made known so you can pray to God for these ventures at your Prayer groups and during Worship services}

The leadership of our Diocese (Bishops, deans, pastors, elders) is constantly on the move within the Diocese and beyond her border to maintain the Church.

These are necessary to keep the good order and will probably always be with us this side of the Second coming of Christ. Sometimes these are however very disruptive of our real aims and goals. Our dream to BUILD and DEVELOP the diocese must many a time be shelved when energy, time and money are directed at these interferences.

It is my wish that we start to pray for guidance to realize our true calling and purpose on all levels of the Church and that we unite our efforts to establish the kingdom of God in our operational sphere instead of undermining the redemptive work of Christ. Hereto may the Holy Spirit help us.

5. What about... Studying and contemplating...

The first Christian Community and the principles at play in the book of Acts. This can be done the 10 days before Pentecost starting on Ascension Day (Pinkster dienste) and we in the light of the guidance of the Holy Spirit asks the Father to send us the Comforter likewise to us. This can be done in conjunction with a study about the principles of ubuntu to contextualize –to make it relevant –to the African reality in which we live.

6. Spotlight on... Ascension Day Celebrations (13 May)

We only realize the value of something when it is taken away from us. This is what happened to Ascension Day when in the previous dispensation in South Africa we made the day a convenient holiday (not Holy day) which ushered in a long weekend in certain occasions. The values of the day, the spiritual

enrichment that can emanate from the day were not realized. This was very convenient to our enemy, as the truth, power and promises of the day could not be instilled in the congregation members.

So you have a task to go to your pastor and /or Congregational Council to probe the relevance of the day and why we need to worship on this day. From the editor's side it is imperative to set time aside on the 13th May to worship. Do not let the blessings of this day pass you by. Closer to the time I will highlight my perspective about the day.

Please intercede for enlightenment about this day in South Africa.

7. What's in it for me?

Tell us about your understanding of Ascension Day. What does your congregation plan for this day? How can we persuade congregant to consecrate this day again? Share your stories and suggestions. The **Message Board** is waiting to capture your views and discussions (and on anything else!) Handy spiritual books are up for grabs for the ones posting the most creative views! Your efforts here can just stimulate others (even internationally to embark on your suggestions and enhance the lives of many!)

Wishful thinking

Encouragement is the oxygen of the soul. Please encourage others to subscribe to our newsletter which aims to inform, stimulate, to involve and to grow the visitors to our site. It is still my wish to hear from you. Please volunteer to contribute to any of these regular features. You also need to tell us your needs and whether these regulars are sufficient and cater for your expectations. Any other brilliant ideas will be gladly accommodated. Eagerly waiting to hear from you.

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