

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#04-1028

## ***Ambassadors of Conciliation [Reconciliation]***

March 12, 2010

As reported in issue #04-1025, March 9, 2010, *Agnostic & Reconciliation*, the word *reconciliation* has been in the news quite a bit lately as politicians posture to pass healthcare legislation. They have a right to use the word, even if they abuse or distort its meaning. But, where is the ecclesia of God when it comes to this word? Has it dropped out of our vocabulary?

We have the true message of reconciliation that the world needs to hear, but have we lost the message to those who speak falsehood? Has reconciliation become such a common and abused word that its meaning is no longer understood, even among the Lord's people? Have we lost the high ground and the glorious word of reconciliation? May it not be coming to that!

So that we are clear on the meaning of the word, *reconciliation* means "to make friendly again or win over to a friendly attitude; to bring two parties into harmony or peace with each other." This is what God has done and is doing through and in His Son, our Lord Jesus.

Now, what follows has been presented in other writings, but, as Paul wrote, **to write the same things again is not trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you** (Philippians 3:1). The Concordant Version is referenced, for it offers greater clarity on the subject by making a distinction between the words *conciliation* and *reconciliation*. The fact of the matter is that we have been given the word of the conciliation and are to be ambassadors of this word.

Most translations exclusively use the word *reconciliation*, but the editor of the Concordant Version has pointed out that it is important to make a distinction between *conciliate* (or *conciliation*) and *reconcile* (or *reconciliation*). The Greek word *allasso* means "to make different, to change." From this root word are derived two other words: *katallasso*, which is translated into the verb *conciliate* [noun form *katallage* translated as *conciliation*]; and *apokatallasso*, which is translated into the verb *reconcile*.

**(18) Yet all is of God, Who conciliates [katallasso] us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation [ministry] of the conciliation, (19) how that God was in Christ, conciliating [katallasso] the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, and placing in us the word of the conciliation [katallage]. (20) For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. (20) We are beseeching for Christ's sake, "Be conciliated [katallasso] to God!" (21) For the One not knowing sin, He makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:18-21 CV [NASB])**

The words *conciliate* and *conciliation* are probably foreign to most people since these words are seldom used in common conversation; but they are vital words in understanding what God has done and is doing. *Conciliate* means "to win over; soothe the anger of; make friendly; placate" and "to gain by friendly acts." We could say that this is the first part of a peace agreement. When two parties are at war with each other, they are enemies. If one party makes peace with the other, then that party *conciliates* with the other, and there is *conciliation*. Thus, *conciliation* refers to one side of a peace deal; that is, one party is at peace with another, but it does not follow that the other party has made peace with the one that has made peace. There is still enmity coming forth from one party. It is as if one waves the white flag of truce, but the other continues shooting.

For a peace deal to be of any value, it takes both parties to be at peace with each other. When both parties have entered into peace with each other, it is called *reconciliation*. Thus, the word *reconciliation* means that both parties are in harmony and at peace with one another. It is a mutual peace agreement.

Each party has to make peace (to be conciliated) with the other to come into a mutual peace (to be reconciled).

Notice that conciliation starts with God alone: **For if, being enemies, we were conciliated [katallasso] to God through the death of His Son, much rather, being conciliated [katallasso], we shall be saved in His life** (Romans 5:10 CV).

When all mankind were dead in their trespasses and sin, Christ died! This is where conciliation starts. The peace treaty starts at the cross. Mankind was incapable of entering into a peace treaty with God. Can you imagine what it would be like if mankind wanted to be at peace with God, but He did not want to be at peace with mankind? It is a sad commentary on our day that many seem to project our Heavenly Father as one who refuses to be at peace with most of mankind, as if He were an angry and mean God bent on destroying mankind. **God is love**, and He demonstrates His love, for **He first loved us!** His purpose is to bring all, without exception, into His will and love.

At the cross, God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them. There was enmity between God and mankind, but God has made peace with mankind at the cross of Calvary. In other words, man is no longer God's enemy because enmity has been removed through His Son's death on the cross. **God Himself has waved the white flag of peace.** Through Christ, the entire world, which means all mankind, has been conciliated to God, and God is not counting our offenses against us. Do you grasp the greatness of these words? **He is not counting your offenses against you!** Consider how a paraphrased version reads: **That is, that God was in Christ making peace between the world and himself, not putting their sins to their account, and having given to us the preaching of this news of peace** (2 Corinthians 5:19 BBE). Here we discover the very heart of conciliation, making peace, and this is the message that we, as believers, are to be proclaiming to the world that remains an enemy of the cross. God has made peace with the world because of His Son, because of the LORD JESUS! We could say that Jesus is Peace.

Let us not think that God has given up or that conciliation is a thing of the past, for it is an ever-present peace agreement that will continue until the consummation of the eons. In fact, it is God's plan not only to conciliate the world to Himself but to consummate the peace by being reconciled with all in the heavens and on the earth. Ultimately, there will be a mutual peace with all in His creation. Let it sink in; **God fully intends to have reconciliation with ALL.** How do we know? Paul tells us so.

**(19) For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, (20) and through Him to reconcile [apokatallasso] all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.** (Colossians 1:19-20 NASB)

In verse 20, Paul used the Greek word *apokatallasso* that is uniformly translated as *reconcile*. Not only has God conciliated Himself to the world, but through His Son, He fully intends to bring about the reconciliation of all. A day is coming when all creation will be in harmony with God; all creation will be at peace, barring none. Think about it! If this is what God has done and is doing through Christ Jesus our Lord, then how can we not be at peace with one another? How can we reckon the offenses of others against them? How can we not forgive one another, no matter what the offense? Before reconciliation becomes a reality, there needs to be forgiveness on the part of those who have been offended. Without forgiveness, there can be no reconciliation because one party remains living in the past and is unwilling to move beyond it. **Forgiveness is an issue of the heart.** One who forgives forgets the offense and leaves it in the past or, as Paul did, forgets what lies behind. See issues #02-0821 through #04-0824, April 2008, *Forgetting What Lies Behind*.

Dear beloved saints and all who are in battle with others, it is time to turn to the cross and see Jesus, His blood, and His forgiveness of our sins. It is time to forget what lies behind and press on toward the goal for the prize; and this begins with forgiveness, for without forgiveness, there is no reconciliation, and there is no redemption (Colossians 1:14). God has forgiven all of us, and He has conciliated Himself to all of us. It is time to get beyond the past and make peace with God, then make peace with others, and then take the message to the world as ambassadors of Christ. **Be conciliated to God!**