**1st Wednesday Reflection & Prayer Hour March 2017**

*MMI keeps the first Wednesday of the month as a day for corporate prayer. The hour set aside is 9.00am-10.00am, but for those who are not able to join in prayer then, please use these notes to pray for an hour at some time during the day.*

*“ My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, ‘ Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.” Jn 4 v 34-38*

There is a lot in these few verses. Please read though the verses a couple of times and spend a moment reflecting on what the Spirit is saying to you.

**Christ compares his work to harvest-work**. The harvest is appointed at a given time but is also anticipated before it comes; so was the gospel. Harvest-time is busy; everyone must be at work. Harvest-time is short, and harvest-work must be done then, or not at all. Similarly the time of the gospel is a season, which if once past, cannot be recalled. We have missed the opportunity. There are plenty of examples. Think of the “revivals”.

**Is our work ever finished?** Many Christians go on working as long as they are physically and mentally capable.

**Four months more and then the harvest.** This may have been a proverb at the time of writing, meaning ‘The harvest cannot be rushed’. NIV Study Bible. Is there a temptation to force the harvest when the fields are not properly ripe? In some of our regions, prayer has been offered up for years without any obvious growth. And then suddenly we see the green shoots. Ponder for a moment on the life and work of the late, beloved Flight Lieutenant Chris West, who died in 2014 before he saw any signs of a harvest in India.

**Look at the fields… they are ripe for harvest.** Jesus called his disciples to view what was happening before their eyes. Jesus may have been pledging to his disciples, a harvest of souls they were to reap in the coming years.

How do we discern when the fields are ripe? Maybe we have to be on the ground nurturing and observing? Our RPPGs play a part. We need to prayerfully discern when the fields are ripe and not necessarily take it as read, from a third party, that the harvest is ready. We know we have to prayerfully use our scarce resources to inspect the harvest fields. But reflect on this…Some Christian senior retired officers in the Indian military believe they, the veterans, should be the reapers when the harvest, in their eyes, is ready. But in reality, the harvest in military units in India, is being gathered in now by serving military Christians.

We can see signs, sometimes very clearly, that the harvest is ripening. In India, at the time of writing this reflection, seven serving members of the Assam Regiment publically dedicated their lives to the service of the Lord. A thousand copies of Chris West’s Discipleship course have been requested for use by the Indian Army in Jammu Kashmir. Is this a sign of the harvest alluded to in John 4?

**Now the reaper draws his wages**. The harvest that we are talking about, is an eternal harvest. He who works in love with the word and with doctrine, changes servicemen and women, and turns them to God. This reaper receives wages infinitely more valuable than a military salary, and gathers the harvest to eternal life. He both saves himself and those that hear him

**The sower and the reaper may be glad together.** There is no competition, no rivalry, no “turf war” amongst Christ’s faithful servants. The sower and the reaper share in the joy of the crop.

**Prayer**

Thank God for:

* A blessed MMI Supporters Weekend in February
* successful trip to Middle East Feb.
* attendance in Nigeria at the inaugural Pray and Plan for a Pan African Conference in 2018.
* The outreach to the Assam Regiment

Pray for:

* The Lord to bring the right people forward to take over from Jos and Richard.
* ACCTS visit in March 2017, to new MCFs in India
* Discernment over what should be followed up after the Lubbecke gathering
* The pan India MCF conference being planned for Nov 2017
* A new VP for Southern Africa.
* Cyprus Gathering in April, for funding and for all expected delegates to be able to attend

*DPH*