

## **GUIDANCE BY PRINCIPLE AND REVELATION**

By Laurence Singlehurst

As I have worked amongst post-modern young people in the past few years and have tried to understand the impact that post-modernity has had on young people, I have come to a number of understandings, many of which are in the document that I have already produced on post-modernity. However, one area that I have noticed, is the whole area of guidance. I think there is a warning and encouragement for us that I want to make and for us to think about.

I believe that part of YWAM's DNA comes from the fact that God has used YWAM to be an organisation that re-states loud and clear that He does speak to people personally. That we are His sheep, we can hear His voice by the whisper of His Spirit through prophecies, charismatic gifts etc. - if you like, by revelation we can hear the voice of God. That is deep in the DNA of YWAM through the teaching of Joy Dawson and many others and it is not something that any one of us would want to back away from. We can all point to those times and moments in the big and the small when we have felt the prompting of the Holy Spirit where we have been obedient and seen God do great and wonderful things.

However, I think it is also important for us to understand that for those of us who are above 35, we grew up in a world where Christian values, for many us, were a part of our culture. We grew up in churches that taught values and principles. When we didn't have guidance specifically by the whisper of the Holy Spirit our lives did not shut down, we fell back on to the inner core of values and principles that had been built into us.

The danger is that many of the post-modern young people who we are discipling do not have within them a 'core' of Christian values and principles. The values that run their lives are very post-modern, they don't conform to a Christian world-view and the values don't guide them in the right direction. When they come into a Christian environment seeking to know what the will of God is, what is good, acceptable and perfect, if we, either by over emphasis or just because we are not clear, give them an understanding that God speaks by revelation as the major form, then I think we have a problem. The problem being is that if they don't hear God speak to them in a situation by revelation, then they go into neutral or stop, rather than falling back on principles. Their lives will be paralysed because they don't have enough 'core' principles and values inside them.

It is extremely important for us in a post-modern world to encourage the revelation side, but also to equally encourage and understand that God speaks by principle and principle is not second-class guidance. Principle and revelation are both, in the words of our youth culture, 'sexy' ways for God to speak to us. One is not better than the other, both are essential.

The type of guidance that we might find by principle is that we obey the commands of God. By principle we: love Him, put Him first, we don't need revelation to do that; we love others, sacrificial love is the way to go and we reach out to the lost. When Philip left Jerusalem in the midst of persecution, by principle he moved out, because he feared for his life, by principle he shared his faith and was involved in a revival and by principle he disciplined people. Later on God spoke to him by revelation. The revival that Philip was part of was equally spiritually significant as the meeting of the queen's eunuch in the desert.

In terms of their lives, we also want to keep encouraging young people to hear the voice of God, as far as guidance is concerned. But, we also want them to understand that God speaks by desires (this is not a bad thing); that God speaks through what we are good at (that is vocational talent); our intellectual/practical/artistic gifts; through our friends and family; by His Spirit and that we can draw some conclusions and see some of the areas we need to develop.

I would encourage us, as those involved in discipling young people in a post-modern environment, to make sure that when we teach guidance we teach it holistically; that we are giving kids values and principles to live by. Challenging them to live by them, as well as encouraging them to have a sense of the Holy Spirit speaking to them.