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**THE WORD OF THE LORD GROWS: CHRISTIAN APACHE VOICES**

 *A farmer went out to sow his seed.* With these words Jesus began his “Parable of the Sower” (Luke 8:4-15). He soon explained, *The seed is the word of God.* Seed, which is sown and nourished, grows. Similarly, when the Word of God is proclaimed in its truth and purity, faith is produced and grows. The New Testament writers quickly adopted Jesus’ image. Peter told his readers, *you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God* (1 Peter 1:23). Paul added, *All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing* (Colossians 1:6). That’s what mission work is all about.

 I have titled this presentation THE WORD OF THE LORD GROWS. In 1896 a frightened missionary, Paul Mayerhoff, walked onto the Ft. Apache Indian Reservation with Bible in hand. The enduring Gospel has been proclaimed ever since and has born good and abundant fruit. You, sitting here today, look around; look at each other. THE WORD OF THE LORD GROWS.

 I have subtitled this paper—CHRISTIAN APACHE VOICES. God said, *my word that goes out from my mouth … will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it* (Isaiah 55:11). God keeps his promise. I want you to hear Christian Apache voices from across the decades illustrate the growth of the Gospel in this Apache Mission.

**QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED**

1. Why is the Word of God often referred to as “seed” by New Testament writers?

2. In what ways is Gospel outreach like farming?

2. Is it too simplistic to summarize “success” in a world mission field as “The WORD OF THE LORD GROWS?”

**WORD**

1. Have you ever heard the expression, this person “is as good as his/her word?”

 Read 2 Peter 1:21 and 2 Timothy 3:16. The Bible is whose Word? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Since we know who inspired every word of the Bible, what does that tell us?

 Read John 17:17. Can the Bible be trusted? Why?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Read Revelation 22:18-19. Do we need to add anything to the Bible or take anything out?

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3. What is the twofold purpose of the Bible?

 Read John 20:31. The Bible is designed to bring us to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus and thus \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us.

 Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The Bible is designed to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Christians for God-pleasing living as God’s children.1

**SEED**

1. God uses several word pictures or metaphors to describe and explain his Word.

 a. Read Hebrews 4:12. God’s Word is like a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 b. Read James 1:23. God’s Word is like a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 c. Read Psalm 119:105. God’s Word is like a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. In the passages cited in the introduction (Luke 8:4-15 and 1 Peter 1:23), God’s Word is

 compared to seed.

 a. What elements are needed for a seed to grow to maturity and bear fruit.

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 b. Where is the seed of God’s Word planted and nourished?

 Read Luke 4:16-22. The seed is planted and nourished \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 Read 2 Timothy 3:15. The seed is planted and nourished \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­.

 Read Acts 8:26-39. The seed is planted and nourished \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 List other places where the seed is nourished and refreshed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SOWER**

1. Who is the farmer who sows the seed of God’s Word?

 a. Read Isaiah 55:11. The sower is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 b. Read 2 Timothy 4:2. The sower is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 c. Read 1 Peter 3:15 and John 1:40-46. The sower is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. What is the underlying reason why the farmer sows the seed?

 Read 2 Corinthians 4:13-15; 5:14-15 and Acts 4:20. Sowing the Gospel seed starts with

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and from there \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**GROWTH**

1. The seed of God’s Word grows vertically. The more the Christian studies the Word of God, the closer that person draws to the Lord.

 a. Read Luke 8:8. How much “increase” can a Christian expect to realize by studying God’s

 Word? Multiple Choices: In Palestine one grain of wheat can produce as many as2:

 1) 20 other grains.

 2) 50 other grains.

 3) 100 other grains.

 4) 150 other grains.

 Extra Credit. One seed of corn can produce how many kernels on the cob? Go count.

 b. What happens to a person who is constantly nourished by the Word of God?

 1) Read 2 Peter 3:17-18. The Word causes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 2) Read Psalm 119:105. The Word provides \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 3) Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The Word is useful for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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2. The seed of God’s Word grows horizontally. That is to say, it spreads from person to person.

 a. Read Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20. Even during a period of persecution, how successfully does the Word of God spread from person to person?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 b. What are some different ways in which the word is spread? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED**

1. Question. Why is the Word of God often referred to as “seed” by New Testament writers?

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3. Question. Is it too simplistic to summarize “success” in a world mission field as “The WORD OF THE LORD GROWS?”

 a. The name of this Bible Study series is THE WORD OF THE LORD GROWS.3 Why was the word “GROWS” used instead of “grew?” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 b. Why is THE WORD OF THE LORD GROWS an appropriate summary of mission work

 within the individual, in the congregation, and in world mission settings? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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CLOSING PRAYER

 God’ Word is our great heritage And shall be ours forever;

 To spread its light from age to age Shall be our chief endeavor.

 Through life it guides our way; In death it is our stay.

 Lord, grant, while worlds endure, We keep its teachings pure

 Throughout all generations. (Christian Worship. Hymn 293)

 Almighty Father, bless the Word Which through your grace we now have heard.

 Oh, may the precious seed take root, Spring up, and bear abundant fruit.

 (Christian Worship. Hymn 323)

ENDNOTES

1This section is liberally adapted from *New Life in Christ* by Forrest L. Bivens and David J. Valleskey. 1986. Milwaukee: WELS Board for Parish Services.

2The correct answer is given in *Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to St. Luke* by William F.

Arndt. 1956. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

3The title of this paper comes from the Bible. In addition, Martin H. Franzmann aptly titled his excellent and influential book *The Word of the Lord Grows: A First Historical Introduction to the New* Testament (1961. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House).