A Proven Pattern: *"For I am God … The Holy One among you"*. (Hosea 11:9)

The work of worldwide missions has become a huge multibillion-dollar business and never before has so much been said and written concerning the right methods, fruitful strategies, programmes and planning. So much has been written about the training of workers, team building and team maintaining, pastoral care for the workers on the Field etc. Yet in the very multitude of words there is often the danger that we lose sight of the basic spiritual realities and become occupied with side issues.

There are three fundamental principles in the ministry of reconciling men, women and children to God.

1. Our ultimate aim is the spiritual regeneration and transformation of people of all ages.

Teaching the illiterate to read, educating them and lifting them economically is praiseworthy. But unless they are brought to a saving knowledge of God through the Lord Jesus we fail woefully.

2. We face very formidable spiritual opposition.

We know that the forces of spiritual darkness will increase in power and in subtleness this as the end of the age approaches.

3. We must be skilled and disciplined in the use of spiritual weapons.

Our warfare is first and foremost a spiritual warfare and success can only come by using spiritual means. Romans 8:16 says, ***"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are the children of God"***. It is only by the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit that men women and children can experience for themselves the transforming grace of God.

This means that our communicating this message of life is, in a sense, only figurative speaking. We only bear witness to its truth, for it is the Holy Spirit who directly communicates this divine word into our lives. Much of the Muslim World lives in the age-old bondage of evil spirits whom they grudgingly serve, but fear to leave.

The experiences of these past years have impressed upon us the intensity of the spiritual battle in every place. In some places there are some conversions and there is evidence of growing spiritual depth and leadership ability in the national believers. But, as always, the forces of spiritual darkness have rallied to a desperate counter-attack. In some areas there has been little known response. In other areas some people, even families, who earlier professed their faith in the Lord Jesus have turned back.

What should we do? Some workers regularly gather together for a number of days of fasting, prayer and waiting on God. The usual outcome of such a time is a work of cleansing and renewing and battles won in the heavenlies.

It would be very strange if, in his warfare against the whole church of Jesus Christ, our arch enemy, Satan, should spare those seeking to establish the church in his domain – hitherto uncontested for many centuries. He makes every effort to discourage us, to lull us into complacency, to keep us from prayer, to confuse us with secondary issues, to wear out our workers with poor health and, if possible, drive them from the Field.

How often it is a real hunger of heart that causes our teams to gather periodically. There is an intensity of prayer akin to desperation and from the outset it is a time of spiritual warfare against the principalities and powers until the enemy capitulates and numbers of local believers are set free from bondages that have crippled them and non-believers are won for the Lord Jesus.

"The very weapons we use are not those of human warfare, but powerful in God's warfare for the destruction of the enemy's strongholds." (2 Cor. 11:4 – Phillips)

So how effective are we in the use of these weapons in the work to which we are called? Many of us have found that ordinary routine praying is seldom effective. Satan and his hosts are unmoved by it. But where prayer is definite, determined and desperate; where we set ourselves to seek God as Daniel did; where prayer is **in the Spirit** and much use is made of the authority of the all-prevailing name of the Lord Jesus and, above all, where prayer reaches behind the difficulties and disinterest to demand the defeat of the evil spirits that hold men in darkness, then heaven is opened, power is evident and the gates of hell cannot prevail against the onslaught.

We will have no easy victory. We will have no easy answer. This is war! But the ultimate victory is already won and for those ready to join in the spiritual battle, what greater reward is there than to see the 'prey' rescued from the satanic 'strong man' and transformed into the image of the Lord Jesus finally to join in the heavenly company giving glory to the Lamb.