***THE CONVERSIONS OF PETER & CORNELIUS***

(Acts 10, Acts 11:2-18, Acts 15:7-12)

**INTRODUCTION**

* Peter repeats story to Jewish leaders in Acts 11 and to Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15.
* The Conversion of Cornelius is the basis on the mission to the Gentiles and thus this is the most pivotal incident related to World Missions to be found in Scripture.
* The conversion of Cornelius opened the door to the Evangelization of the World. We are here today because of what happened in Cornelius’ home on that fateful day!

**SIMILARITIES BETWEEN PETER & CORNELIUS**

* BOTH WERE God fearing
* Both saw visions
* Both heard God speak to them
* Both lacked some basic truths
* Both needed and had a dramatic paradigm shift (metamorphosis) (only here, Romans 12 and Transfiguration)

**WHAT PETER LACKED**

* Liberation from understanding Jewish laws as means and not ends
* Belief in the universality of the Gospel

**WHAT CORNELIUS LACKED**

* Understanding of Gospel message (it was not enough to be a “God fearer”, he needed to hear and respond to the Gospel message)
* Experience of God’s forgiveness through Jesus’ death and resurrection as well as the personal presence of Holy Spirit

**DIFFERING UNDERSTANDINGS OF CONVERSION**

* Most Churches base their ecclesiology on a NT model which is closest to theirs. Because the NT churches had varied ecclesiologies, differing traditions are justified in this way.
* The same is true with our understanding of CONVERSION. The NT offers differing models – immediate, gradual, indistinct – allowing differing views to be supported from its teachings.

**CONCLUSION**

**Cornelius’ spiritual pilgrimage:-**

1. From pagan to God fearer
2. From God fearer to Christian

**Peter’s spiritual pilgrimage:-**

1. From Jew to Jewish Christian
2. From Jewish Christian to Christian

**The Engel Scale** (see power point slide attached) This is a model which tries to explain that we need many “metamorphoses” in our pilgrimage to come to God

**Muslim Conversions**

1. They are God fearers
2. They conceive of God as legalistic (similar to Jews)
3. Their conversion process often includes:
   1. dreams & visions
   2. encounters with Christians
   3. encounters with the Scriptures
4. ***There is little distinction between Evangelical and Orthodox Muslim conversions!!***

*Conversion is a paradigm shift to liberate us from the shackles of idolatries which separate us from God.*

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