

PRAYER IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE • II CHRON. 7:14



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Challenging Christians to Pray — August 2006

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*“Intercessors are like eagles,
they don't flock, you find
them one at a time.”*

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From The Heart Of An Intercessor

Apostolic Evangelism

(My recent trip to Nigeria)

How good it is to be back home from a glorious and spiritually productive 24-day "missionary journey" to Nigeria, West Africa! First of all, may I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your prayers, and believe me, they were heard and answered gloriously. I made my first trip to Nigeria in 1991, and since then the Lord has blessed us with many opportunities to share the gospel throughout the nation. During my 24-day ministration, I preached about 40 messages and in every service, I saw the glory of God descending upon the people in "apostolic power and purity." Praise be to Jesus for the salvation of 1500 precious souls in Nigeria!

May I say that Nigerians are known for their hospitality and the manner in which they worship God. They did worship the Lord passionately as citizens of the heavenly kingdom. When I saw their happy faces, I knew I had to come up to a new level of heart consecration, and I could not waste their time with the superfluous; that I was called to affirm our universal faith, to speak to their strength and not to their weakness; to draw strength from their faith to fill my hungry soul; to feast from the character of their riches in Christ, so that the one who is supposed to minister was ministered unto, and by being ministered unto, ministered to my brothers and sisters. When we serve our brothers and sisters, we serve Christ. Our service to others become a genuine expression of our life in Christ; it is a service purified from self-interest and personal gain.

I visited a church in one of Nigeria's thousands of villages. That is where the real Nigeria resides; and the village bazaar is like our shopping center, where people come from miles to sell and buy, and what catches the eye is not the products, but the people in clustered groups, visiting, talking, laughing, in human dialogue unlike silent people in our shopping malls, pressed by the crowds but untouched by the human spirit, each going his way in lonely isolation.

I sat and talked with many village people who touched my heart and I will never forget them. Poor to be sure; for the villagers walked for miles on foot; but they are part of the body of Christ, a lively community, where the only commodity they have is love and simplicity; the only skill they own is the universal language of smile, the only culture

they develop is the culture of friendship. When I saw their happy faces, I was provoked to envy of people who get so much from so little. Oh, how blessed it was to see the faces of those precious brothers and sisters singing gloriously the praises of God. It was the thrill and excitement of "apostolic evangelism." As I listened to their passionate singing, I could sense a divine presence among them. The opening night will never be forgotten. The message of the cross was plainly explained until the tears of joy began to flow down the cheeks of the participants. With one accord, many came and stood at the altar singing, "*Soon and very soon we are going to see the King!*" Can you visualize the spiritual ecstasy of that moment? There were no frills, no gimmicks, no twitting, no book reviews, no well-known personalities, but God and God alone touching hearts and meeting needs. The people prayed, sang and wept!

When God moves, it always begins with prayer. I believe the Lord is reversing the spiritual order, and some of the materially impoverished nations of the world are on fire for God. In fact, Nigeria has over 5,200 missionaries serving in 56 countries. Once we travel to a foreign country, especially Africa, we have to reverse our entire missionary theology. We need our brothers and sisters more than they need us. The village Christians live from day to day and they trust in God with a pure heart. They are so serene, so simple and humble, yet so powerful; so transparent in their child-likeness; so regal in their unpretentiousness, and awesome in their humility. As I left their village, I felt as though I was leaving behind me all the trust, faith, beauty and the pure joy in the universe. Something of God's majestic love has rubbed off on the village Christians.

We've already established a church in one of the villages under the competent leadership of Pastor Edwin C. Nwaoha. With God's help, we're moving forward with prayerful plans to plant new churches in various villages. The Lord wants us to participate in world evangelization. Participation costs us our time, efforts and money. May God help us to do everything we can to fulfill the "Great Commission" before Jesus returns. We're enriched while we evangelize. We are blessed when we give from the heart in loving obedience to His command.

When God opens the door, no man can shut it. The Lord blessed us with hundreds of precious souls in Nigeria because of the generosity of some who cared enough to invest a portion of their blessing in reaching the lost. Many Christians in the world are still not aware of the challenge of the unreached, and many that are aware feel little or no responsibility. Believe me, the trumpet is ready to sound and Jesus is about to return. Once again, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for caring and sharing with God's work here in a lovely fashion. When we get to feel what God feels for the world, we're more likely to understand the compassion of a loving Father. Let's see the world through the loving eyes of Jesus who rejects no one!

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*Sharing Jesus is our priority,
Doing His will is our purpose,
We are serious when we say –
Jesus fills our cup and it runs over.*

Change, Change, Change!

Quite often, we hear, "*Times have changed, and we must change with the time.*" American novelist, Ellen Glasgow wrote, "*Not all changes are good, and not all movements are forward.*"

It's becoming increasingly difficult to live a godly life because wherever one turns around someone is always reminding him that biblical values have changed. Our inability to live a godly life is rationalized because "nobody does it"– nobody takes the godly walk seriously, anymore. The moral lapses are rationalized because everybody does it. It is not surprising how Christians are losing their moral and spiritual compass. Times have changed, we're told, sin doesn't matter – it is just a little word. *Sin is a fact, not a defect; sin is red-handed mutiny against God.*

In years past, Christians turned the world upside down; today, the world turns us upside down. Harnack, the historian, said that *the Church influenced the world most when it was most unlike the world.* Julie Stringer, a 15-year-old from Corsicana, Texas, wrote: "*It is not the church that should change to suit man, but man should change to please and glorify God*" (U.S. News & World Report, July 1, 1991). I commend Miss Stringer for her extra-ordinary perception on spiritual matters. Maybe it's time that our church leaders learn spiritual truths from our young people!

It's safe to say that the 21st century, which has made great strides in science and technology, undoubtedly calls for the blind acceptance of unthinkable behavior in every sphere of life as a fundamental and necessary law of progress. "*Even Bible Christians today,*" as one has said, "*are more concerned with being geared to the times than in being anchored to the Rock of Ages' unchanging Word.*" Today, Christians blindly accept lifestyles once deemed immoral and sinful.

When we lose our moral standards, we lose our way. The forces of change are found everywhere, and they are more subtle than ever before and therefore, often more dangerous. Ours is a changing society. *We have turned every virtue into vice and every vice into virtue.* Every day we have to make decisions about whether something is right or wrong. We should live by God's precepts and stand for what is honorable in His sight even if what is wrong is popular.

A great revivalist of the past, Vance Havner wrote, "*Today, for all our talk about religious revival, and for all our gigantic church activity, something is still missing. How often we hear that something 'new' has been added to this or that. The real trouble with us is that something very 'old' has been subtracted. We have the words; we have the status; we have the form; but it is all without the force. We are waving the scabbard when the sword is gone.*"

"*For I am the Lord, I change not...*" (Malachi 3:6) "*The same flowers come back year after year, preaching the same sweet sermon of the changeless faithfulness of our God.*"

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For more on the subject, read Matthew Skariah's probing and eye-slashing book

The Forbidden Zone, an exposé on dying-to-self

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