

# Putting Feet To Your Faith

by Peter Hammond



Frontline Fellowship  
Cape Town  
South Africa



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At the end of this book I also list some of the authors (many of whom I know personally) and their books which God has used to change my life and enable me to put feet to my faith in this great adventure of discipleship -following our Lord Jesus Christ.

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# DEDICATION

To **Rev. Erlo Stegen**, the Founder and Director of KwaSizabantu Mission in Kwazulu/Natal, which is undoubtedly the most successful Mission station in Africa. We praise God that He has so abundantly poured out His blessings upon the Church and the many ministries of KwaSizabantu - Domino Servite School, Cedar College of Education, Radio Kwezi, Khanya Press, Christians For Truth, the Choir and many mission outposts and congregations worldwide. Your lifelong dedication to God and your faithfulness in putting feet to your Faith continues to be an inspiration and example to all Christians.

May our Lord Jesus Christ continue to bless all at KwaSizabantu with the abiding fruit of Revival.

# Putting Feet To Your Faith



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# FOREWORD

by Paul Lindstrom

It was the Puritan cleric, John Owen, who wrote: “*Sin may be the occasion of greatest sorrow when there is no sorrow for sin.*” How tragic it is today that absence of sorrow is exponentially prevalent within the church.

In the Bible, God’s people are identified as the “*Church of the living God the pillar and ground of the truth.*” The fact is, however, that the Church of the 1990’s caught up in innane and vacuous music, show-biz-like entertainment, and a happy clappy, make-me-feel-good, “*itching ears*”(2 Tim. 4:4) theology of life, is no longer interested in strong doctrine and a Biblical world and life view. Sin in high places, for example, is seldom if ever mentioned.

Every day in the U.S. over 4000 babies in the womb are murdered in the most barbaric ways. Known sodomites and notorious philanderers serve in the U.S. Congress and administrate top-level government positions. Sexual promiscuity abounds. Where is the prophetic voice in the midst of such erotic and libidinous carnality? Second amendment rights to keep and bear arms are in peril and government spending has reached catastrophic proportions. Where is the righteous indignation of denominational leaders and mega-church pulpiteers? Why the deafening silence? Isaiah tells us: “*His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs: they cannot bark*” (Isaiah 56:10). We are witnessing the horrendous demoralization of America, South Africa, and much of the rest of the world due to the apathy of the church. Humanists are in power in Washington, D.C. because of dumb dogs in the pulpit. Homosexuals have wreaked havoc upon American society because of barkless dogs and blind watchmen in our churches. The ungodly rule because of cowardly and compromised Christian leadership.

Such impenetrable leadership has impacted every realm of Christian activity. The reliability and authenticity of the Bible is now being debated and questioned on many evangelical college campuses which are hardly distinguishable from their secular counterparts. Christian bookstores and publishers promote their mishmash of “*Christian Rock*” artist albums and other incongruous “*music.*” The aisles and catalogues are filled with



psychological discourses on everything from the “*complete*” female to the “*incomplete*” male. Easy believism alongside of caricatures of God that are but figments of writers’ imaginations all contribute to this man-made cacophony.

The weak-kneed behaviour of the vast majority of today’s Christian leadership, and its nauseous harvest of congregational indifference, have left our country adrift like a ship without a “*compass*.” God’s hand of judgement, therefore, is increasingly evident.

The plague of Aids, soaring droughts, relentless flooding, devastating hurricanes, suffocating blizzards, gigantic mudslides, monstrous forest fires, growing government tyranny, humiliating defeats in battle, economic calamities, unexplained sickness, and disastrous earthquakes are the judgements of God upon a careless and rebellious people.

We have been weighed in the balance. We have been found wanting.

Greater judgements await us unless we repent and return to God.

In this critical hour, how desperately we need, as Peter Hammond has written, to “*put feet to our faith*.” The time has come to quit sitting in the back seat of humanism’s bus. Jesus said: Christians are “to occupy even in the face of persecution, even in the midst of conflict. To those who put feet to their faith and make the Great Commission their supreme ambition ultimate victory is assured. The day will come when:

***“the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”***

Habakkuk 2:14

Grace and peace to you.

Rev. Dr. Paul Lindstrom

Pastor, ***Church of Christian Liberty***, Chicago.

Founder and Superintendent, ***Christian Liberty Academy*** and ***Christian Liberty Academy Satellite Schools***

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# INTRODUCTION

## The Adventure of Discipleship

My adventure of discipleship began on 3rd April 1977. It was on that Sunday evening that I wandered into a local cinema in Cape Town. I did not realise that it had been hired by the local Baptist Church for an evangelistic rally. My family had recently moved to South Africa from what was then Rhodesia. At that time in South Africa cinemas were all closed by law every Sunday in honour of the Lord's Day.

So I was somewhat puzzled to see the cinema packed with people singing religious songs. I sat down in one of the only seats still open - near the front. The hymns were followed by testimonies and prayers. I wondered when the film would start. Perhaps this is what South Africans do instead of adverts and previews on Sundays, I thought. All the same, it seemed a bit excessive to have over half an hour of all this "religious stuff" before a film!

When the visiting evangelist, Rev. Rex Matthie, stood up to speak, it dawned on me that no film was coming - but I was close to the front and felt trapped. That was the first time I heard the Gospel! The sacrifices and sufferings of Christ were described. "*This is what Christ has done for you*" declared the preacher. "*What have you ever done for Him?*"

His challenge pierced my heart. I had done absolutely nothing for Christ. I had never even thanked God for His creation, for my life or health. I realised that I was a self-centred, lost sinner - truly deserving of the condemnation of Almighty God on the Day of Judgement. When the appeal was made at the end I went forward and publicly committed my life to Christ.

Jeers and sarcastic comments awaited me at home and at school, but my course was set: I had decided to follow Jesus -no turning back! My pastor, 'Doc' Watson, tells me that from the beginning I harassed him for more teaching and for opportunities to serve the Lord. Within two months I was working on a Scripture Union team for a Holiday Mission in Somerset West. During that outreach I gave my first message - a missionary challenge - at the local Presbyterian church.

Within the year I was a Sunday School teacher, youth leader and ran the book table. I devoured Christian literature, attended every meeting and training course possible - whether on evangelism, counselling, holiness or missions. Door to door evangelism, tract distribution in the streets, ministering in old age homes and other Christian service filled my days. One prayer I prayed over and over was: *“Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me, Spirit of the Living God fall afresh on me.”*

Of course I often had more zeal than good sense and doubtless I stepped on more toes and offended many people - by my breathless enthusiasm and headlong rush to present the Gospel challenge to anyone and everyone I came across - more than I am even aware of. My wife tells me I still do - but then adds that I’ve become much more considerate than I used to be. I certainly hope so.

After my first cross border missionary outreach to Mozambique, in 1982, ‘Doc’ Watson, gave me the opportunity take the Sunday morning service. *“Most missionaries tell of what they have done. I am always more interested in what they have **learned!**”* When the early Christian missionaries, Paul and Barnabas returned, they blessed the sending churches with spiritual and practical insights they had learned in the field (Acts 14:27 and 15).

That challenge gripped me. What had I learned? Since then I have always tried to answer that question - in report backs and through *Frontline Fellowship News* reports. Now in this book: *Putting Feet to Your Faith* I have packed some of the most life changing lessons that I learned from the mission fields of Eastern Europe and Africa. It is my prayer that these principles and stories will challenge, bless, inspire and transform you and your work and witness as it has mine.

*“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring Good News, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation. . . Your God reigns!”* Isaiah 52:7

*“Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. . . Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace. . .”* Ephesians 6:10-15





# Chapter 1

## AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER

### **What is Wrong With Our World?**

Almost on a daily basis each of us is confronted by the reality of a world that is in rebellion to its Creator. The desecration of the Lord's Day, the proliferation of pornography, the escalation of crime and violence, the breakdown of moral standards, the legalisation of abortion, the break up of families and the explosion of child abuse all remind us that we live in a sinful society which has forgotten God.

What is wrong with our world? **Sin.** Mankind is in rebellion against God.

### **What is Wrong With the Church?**

Almost as often we wonder what is wrong with the church. Why has the church become so ineffective? How can it be that so many Christians in so many churches have such a diminishing effect on the moral climate of society? Can we honestly say that we have been praying and working against evil when we see evil increasing? (Matt 18:18-20; Psalm 94:16). Has the salt of the earth lost its saltiness? Is the light of the world being hidden under a bowl? (Matt 5:13-16).

During the last 34 years of traveling extensively and ministering in 36 countries, I have had the privilege of witnessing several churches operating as God intended them to - in Revival.

From the perspective of the persecuted churches, and in the light of the Revivals, it becomes crystal clear what is wrong with the average church in the West. Our churches are devoid of the fear of the Lord. The reverential awe and worship of God is missing. Most congregations lack true spiritual leadership and never practise Biblical standards of church discipline. Many church-goers feel like Christians, but think like humanists. They believe they have Christian hearts, but it's quite clear that most have humanist minds, reading more of the newspapers than they ever do of the Bible, and watching TV more than they worship Christ.

Like the church of Laodicea it could be said of many church-goers: *“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm - neither hot nor cold - I am about to spit you out of My mouth ... you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked, so be earnest and repent.”* Revelation 3:15-19

The Church is like a rescue boat. The rescue boat must be in the sea rescuing the perishing, but the sea must not be in the boat. In the same way the church must be in the world rescuing the perishing, but the world must not be in the church.

The tragedy of the modern churches is that: by lowering its standards to allow the unconverted easy access, the church has become flooded and swamped by the world. It is now becoming increasingly difficult to discern any substantial differences between the opinions, moral standards and even conduct of *“Christians”* and pagans.

The published statistics of church growth and the vast numbers coming forward at mass crusades are impressive. Yet those of us who deal with the individual in the pews and on the streets are deeply disturbed. The church generally seems to be growing only in quantity. The quality of devotional and spiritual life and moral standards seems to be deteriorating even more rapidly than the church is expanding in numbers. It is as though the churches have become like huge combine harvesters, yet lacking cutting blades: impressive machinery, much noise and activity —but often ineffective in dealing with the harvest.

If the Gospel is the cutting blade of the church, then we need to ask: what could have blunted our Gospel preaching?

## **What is Wrong With the Gospel Preached?**

Listening to the average *“Gospel”* message proclaimed from all too many pulpits, and on radio and TV, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that most evangelistic messages today are man-centred, emotion based, weak and shallow. The *“Just believe”* gospel is cheap. Judas sold Christ for 30 pieces of silver. We just give Him away free. The *“Just pray this prayer”* message is superficial and it produces superficial converts. The *“easy believism”* so often proclaimed is synthetic. It’s like white bread. All the natural goodness has been refined out and artificial ingredients have been added.

## The Missing Parts of the Gospel Message

Seldom does one hear the nature of God taught on, expounded and explained. To assume that our hearers truly understand and appreciate the majesty, the holiness and the glory of our all-powerful, all-knowing, infinite and eternal Creator is presumptuous.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom (Prov. 9:10). The Lord's mercy extends to those who fear Him (Acts 10:35). The Lord instructs those who fear Him (Psalm 25:12). The foundation for effective service is the fear of the Lord (Joshua 24:14). The Lord's great blessing is upon those who fear Him (Psalm 31:19). Yet, how often do we hear these great truths proclaimed?

***“The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul”*** (Psalm 19:7) and ***“... through the Law we become conscious of sin”*** (Romans 3:20). Yet how often do we proclaim the Law of God?

Martin Luther declared: *“The first duty of the Gospel preacher is to declare God's Law and show the nature of sin.”*

John Bunyan said: *“The man who does not know the nature of the Law cannot know the nature of sin.”*

John Wesley suggested that evangelists should preach 90% Law and 10% grace.

Charles Finney wrote: *“Failure to use the Law is almost certain to result in false hope, the introduction of a false standard of Christian experience, and to fill the church with false converts.”*

Charles Spurgeon declared: *“They will never accept grace until they tremble before a just and Holy Law.”*

As our Lord taught: ***“Do not think I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law ... Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.”***  
Matthew 5:17-19

Similarly the wrath of God, the doctrine of eternal judgment and the reality of Hell receive scant attention in most modern sermons. *“For they would not follow His ways; they did not obey His Law. So He poured out on them His burning anger...”* Isaiah 42:24,25

*“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you fear God.”* Luke 12:5

*“Whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”* John 3:36

*“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.”* Romans 1: 18

Even the heart of the Gospel message —the Redemption achieved by the Blood of Christ’s Atonement on the Cross receives surprisingly little emphasis from most modern evangelists. *“Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”* Hebrews 9:22

*“God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood.”* Romans 3:25

The Scriptures declare that: *“the blood of Jesus, His Son purifies us from all sin.”* 1 John 1:7

Yet how often do we proclaim that message?

Also conspicuous by its absence is a Biblical emphasis and understanding of repentance. I have heard prominent evangelists say that *“repentance is just saying you are sorry”!*

By way of contrast the Bible emphasises three aspects of repentance:

**Conviction** —a change of mind

**Contrition** —a change of heart, and

**Conversion** —a change of life.

*“Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him...”* Isaiah 55:7



It is not enough to confess our sin, we also need to reject sin mentally, to loathe it and forsake it. Repentance involves a change of habits, a change of belief and a change of behaviour.

## **UnBiblical Additions to the Gospel**

In place of the Biblical message of the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the Law of God, the wrath of God and eternal judgment, the need for repentance from sin and faith in the atonement through Christ's blood, many have substituted a series of unBiblical innovations:

Nowhere in the Bible will you find any example of an evangelist, apostle or disciple using any of the following popular phrases or techniques:

*"God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life."* Instead Scripture makes it clear that God is angry with those who refuse to obey and eternity in hell is His plan for the unrepentant.

*"Accept Jesus as your personal Saviour."* "Accept" is the weakest word possible and it is never used in any evangelistic context. Why do not we use the powerful words used in the Bible? e.g. *"God ... now commands all people everywhere to repent"* Acts 17:30. A call to submit to Christ, or to surrender our lives to Him as Lord and Saviour, would be more Biblical than a weak appeal to *"accept Jesus"*.

*"Only you can open the door of your heart. Jesus is standing at the door of your heart knocking. He is a gentleman and will only come in if invited. The handle is only on the inside. Only you can let Him in."* This imaginative emotional appeal ignores the Sovereignty of God. In the case of the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus it would appear that our Lord kicked the door in without any *"permission"* from Saul (Acts 9).

Nowhere in the Bible do we find a single incident of an evangelist or disciple using such imagery to describe conversion. Throughout the Gospel and the book of Acts we are challenged to come to Christ and seek entry into His house. Now we are expected to believe that the situation has so reversed that Christ now comes to us and asks us to allow Him entry!

Perhaps this concept is derived from Revelation 3:20. However, that verse is part of Christ's letter to the church at Laodicea. Far from being an evangelistic message it is a severe rebuke to a lukewarm church: *"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either*

*one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm —neither hot nor cold —I am about to spit you out of My mouth.... Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Behold I stand at the door and knock...*  
Revelation 3:15-20

It is tragic that part of this letter, written to warn the church against the danger of half-heartedness, worldliness and compromise, could have been so abused as to produce lukewarm, semi-saved converts. If only the full context of this passage was used as often as verse 20. Or have strong Biblical words like “*rebuke*”, “*discipline*”, “*earnest*” and “*repent*” become unacceptable to today’s congregations?

Similarly the insipid phrases “*Just believe*” and “*just pray this prayer*” are unBiblical. We certainly must believe —but it is the entire Bible, which we must study, believe, obey, proclaim and apply. We must pray, but we need to do much more than “*just pray*”. The Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ commands us to “*Make disciples ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*” To place a “*just*” in front of any of the commands of Scripture is to devalue all the other important requirements.

Along with these phrases we have accepted several inadequate slogans to convey apparently Christian messages such as: “*Christians aren’t perfect - just forgiven*”. While it is true to say that we are forgiven, yet are imperfect, the insertion of the overused “*just*” turns this slogan into a dangerous half truth. Are we only forgiven? Are we not regenerated as well as redeemed? And what about sanctification? If we have not evidenced a dramatic transformation in our beliefs, moral standards, way of life, behaviour and conduct then it is doubtful if we are even forgiven (Galatians 5:19-25).

## **The Gospel According to Our Lord Jesus Christ**

The recorded examples of how our Lord counselled individuals for salvation stand in sharp contrast to our modern message and methods.

The rich young ruler was earnest. He did not merely raise his hand while every head was bowed and every eye was closed. He did not merely walk down the aisle in response to an impassioned appeal. No, while every eye was opened and every head raised, he ran to Christ. Rather than merely bow his head and repeat a set prayer, he fell on his knees before Christ and pleaded “*What must I do to inherit eternal life?*” Mark 10:17

What was our Lord's response? Did He say "*Just believe*" or "*Just pray this prayer*"? Did He tell him that God loved him and had a wonderful plan for his life? No. Jesus rebuked him: "*Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.*" Our Lord began with the nature of God and the nature of man. Only God is Holy. All men are sinners.

You may ask why Christ rebuked him. Surely our Lord Jesus is God? Yes, but did the young man realise that? Was he merely seeking to flatter man or did he realise with Whom he was talking?

Next our Lord reminded him of the Ten Commandments: "*You know the commandments: Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honour your father and mother.*" "

Many would ask what the Law has to do with eternal life. The Scriptures state that: "***The Law was our tutor, to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.***" Galatians 3:24

Telling people that "*Jesus is the answer*" before they are even asking the question is not helpful. No teacher hands out answer sheets to the students before an exam. Declaring that "*Jesus saves*" to people who are not yet conscious of a need to be saved is ineffective. Until people know the "*bad news*" of hell they are not ready to know the "*Good News*" of Heaven. Until our hearers appreciate the eternal implications of the Holiness of God and the depravity of man, the holy Law of God and eternal judgment — they are not ready to receive the glorious message of Redemption through the sacrifice of Christ.

To put it more bluntly: until we understand that we are wicked sinners, lost and justly doomed to an eternity in hell we are not ready to truly appreciate the message of "*repentance and forgiveness of sins,*" Luke 24:47.

Incredibly the young man declared that he had obeyed all those commandments since he was young. No doubt he was an extraordinary individual —morally upright and devoutly religious —yet he lacked an awareness of his sinfulness. The greatest fault is to be aware of none.

So our Lord tells him: "*one thing you lack... Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven. Then come and follow Me*" Mark 10:21. Some may say that the Lord was demanding several things of him, but it actually amounted to one thing: **repentance**.

Our Lord had singled out the first commandment “*You shall have no other gods before me*”, and the last “*You shall not covet.*” The rich young ruler had apparently made an idol of his wealth. His riches had become more important to him than obedience to God. God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.

The Ten Commandments deal with our relationships with God, our parents and other people. They deal with God, worship, speech, time, authority, life, love, property, truth and conscience. They forbid polytheism, idolatry, profanity, desecration of the Sabbath, dishonouring of parents, murder, adultery, theft, perjury and coveting. By studying the Law of God we come to realise how far short we fall.

The message to those who recognise their transgressions is one of repentance and faith. And as repentance without faith is not true repentance, so faith without repentance is not true faith.

When he heard what our Lord required, “*the man’s face fell. He went away sad because he had great wealth*” (Mark 10:22). Instead of chasing after him and lowering the standard, “*Jesus said to His disciples, ‘How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God!’*” The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus said again, “*Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God!’*” Mark 10:23-24

How often do not we claim that it is easy to be saved. Yet our Lord did not lower the standard. In fact He taught that it would be hard to enter the Kingdom of God. Not only hard for the rich but hard for anyone!

*“The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, ‘Who then can be saved?’ Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible ...”*

Mark 10:26-27

Do we realise the implications of this? All mankind is lost and no one can save himself. Neither can any pastor, evangelist or denomination save anybody. No amount of sacraments, praying, singing or preaching can save anyone. Eloquence cannot do it, neither can emotional techniques or a charged atmosphere.

*“With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”* Mark 10:27.

A Biblical illustration of conversion is found in John 11 when our Lord stood before the tomb and called out: “*Lazarus, come out!*” Now Lazarus had been dead for 4 days. Is it reasonable to call upon a decaying corpse to respond? Nevertheless that is what evangelism is. Outside of Christ we are dead in our transgressions and sins (Eph 2:1). Faith is a gift from God (Eph 2:8) and faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). “*The Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes*” Romans 1:16.

Only the Word of God can save, so why do we subtract from this powerful life-giving Word? And why do we think we can add anything of value to it?

Jesus then emphasised the need for sacrifice and for endurance of persecutions. Finally He promised blessings, rewards and eternal life to those who obey His message (Mark 10:28-31).

This then is the bold and balanced Gospel of Christ: **God is a holy God and His righteous standards are seen in His Law. Man is sinful and needs to repent from his wickedness and trust in Christ. This repentance and faith is to be evident in obedience to Christ, a willingness to sacrifice and to suffer persecution. To those who do so He promises great blessings, rewards and eternal life.**

Instead of offering a weak, diluted, man-centred message of “*believe and receive*”, we need faithfully to proclaim a Christ centred, Bible based and Holy Spirit led message of “*repentance and obedience.*” Rather than making converts we need to: “***make disciples ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you***” (Matthew 28:19-20).

It is this message which deals with the heart of the matter. Anything else would be as inadequate as placing a band-aid plaster on cancer. However, the Gospel of Christ faithfully proclaimed would result in a purged, purified, prayerful and powerful church — prepared to honour and obey Christ in all areas of life.



## Chapter 2

### The New Paganism

It is no longer just primitive tribes that are involved in idolatry, ancestor worship and superstitions. Missionaries are not only confronted with witchcraft in the jungles but also in the cities. It is not only in the Third World that one finds child sacrifice and cannibalism - it is becoming prevalent in the West as well.

***“For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”***

Romans 1:21

Western civilisation has moved from the age of reason to non-reason, from scepticism to mysticism, from disbelief in the Bible to gullible acceptance of every idle fad, theory and ideology.

***“Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man. . .”*** Romans 1:22,23

#### Western Idolatry

While claiming to be secular, the average Westerner is in fact very religious. The modern secular religion of humanism has its own traditions, myths, rituals, systems of belief, values, codes of behaviour and institutions. Humanism even has its own objects of worship - idols.

***“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator. . .”*** Romans 1:25

And so millions of humanists worship rock idols and pop stars. Most of these idols may be drug addicts and perverts but their music and posters dominate the lives of their devoted followers. Their evangelistic rallies (rock concerts) are often the scene of extreme hysteria and fanatical worship by their screaming, dancing and fainting devotees.

***“... The hearts of men moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts...”*** Ecclesiastes 9:3

Sex idols and beauty queens receive extreme adulation from the adoring, lustful or jealous masses. Hollywood has places of worship worldwide where the faithful can pay homage to screen idols. Offerings are not voluntary but are required to gain entry. Most television stations have become outreach missions to promote these man-made idols and humanist values in every home. Soap operas have been an effective medium in promoting permissiveness, situation ethics and immorality.

***“... They are skilled in doing evil; they know not how to do good.”*** Jeremiah 4:22

Entertainment has become a god and the humanist religion worships fame, fortune, beauty, wealth and success (even if it's make-believe). Parties have become humanist worship services and the bar counter a communion table. Drunkenness or orgies are sought after as heights of humanist expression. Humanists have rejected the pleasure of worshiping God and exchanged it for the worship of pleasure.

***“The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the Word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful”*** Matthew 13:22

Science has become another god of humanism, especially the theory of evolution. Despite the lack of proof and the multitude of ever changing and conflicting theories within evolutionism, humanists hold on to this explanation of the origin of man with religious fervour. To the atheist evolution is an unquestionable article of faith - because the alternative is unthinkable!

And it really does need some blind faith to believe that : *“once upon a time there was nothing, and then there was something, and that something became everything!”*

It does not seem very scientific to claim that *“a whole lot of time and a whole lot of nothing ... made everything!”* In fact, the notion that the universe is the product of a big bang seems about as likely as a bomb in a printing press producing an encyclopedia. Nevertheless, this *“fairy tale for grown-ups”*,

this “from mud to monkey to men”, “from goo to the zoo to you” gospel of the evolutionists is regularly palmed off as “science!” (Evolution is actually science fiction.) No wonder the Scripture talks of people who are -

**“always learning, but never able to acknowledge the truth.”** 2 Timothy 3:7

**“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight ...”** 1 Corinthians 3:19

Yet, time and again people prefer to trust in the wisdom of men rather than the Word of God.

**“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’. They are corrupt and their ways are vile.”** Psalm 53:1

And it would seem that the sacred temples of humanists are the secular universities. The Scriptures declare that: **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...”** Proverbs 1:7, but most universities prefer to begin with evolution and atheism. Hence the Bible warns of a “wisdom” that is: **“... earthly, unspiritual, of the devil”** James 3:15

Again we are warned :

**“See to it that no-one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.”** Colossians 2:8

The bishops and cardinals of this philosophy are often the professors and deans of the local university.

**“Professing to be wise, they become fools.”**

Romans 1:22

**“... The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.”** 1 Corinthians 3:20

These humanistic temples of training serve an important role in promoting self worship and the worship of pride and status.

**“This is the fate of those who trust in themselves, and of their followers, who approve their sayings. Like**



***sheep they are destined for the grave, and death will feed on them ... their forms will decay ...”***

Psalm 49:13,14

The evangelists of humanism are generally found amongst the editors, journalists and producers of the mass media. Not only do most humanists trust the media as their source of information and as the revelation of truth, but many Christians are influenced by its worldview as well. This is inevitable as most Christians spend more time reading the newspaper than the Bible.

***“The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.”*** Proverbs 15:14

For many humanists sports are an idol, with rugby or cricket, football or baseball dominating their lives. For others politics has become like a god. To the humanist, government is a replacement for God - “*Big Brother*,” provider, the all-powerful ultimate authority.

***“You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath ... You shall not bow down to them or worship them.”*** Exodus 20:3,5

Others have made a cult out of earth worship and environmentalism and ***“worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator ...”*** Romans 1:25

For many, wealth and materialism are an obsession:

***“People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”*** 1 Timothy 6:9,10

For people-pleasers it is not what is right but what is popular that is their guiding principle as they slavishly follow the crowd. Even ministers have deified “*the people*” in support of this herd instinct.

***“For they loved praise from men more than praise from God.”*** John 12:43

Yet God’s Law declares:

***“Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong ... do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd. ..”***

Exodus 23:2

***“How can you believe if you accept praise from one another yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?”*** John 5:44

Many worship freedom and exalt liberation above all else. However, in the name of “*freedom*” many have been murdered and oppressed. The worst atrocities and enslavements have been committed under the banner of “*liberation*.”

***“They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity.”*** 2 Peter 2:19

***“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.”*** Galatians 5:13

## **Worshipping the Dead**

It is common knowledge that many in Asian and African cultures worship the departed spirits. This ancestor worship, or animism, is regarded with amusement or disdain by many Europeans and Americans, who seem blind to their own variations.

Millions of devoted socialistic; have made pilgrimages to the tomb of Vladimir Lenin in Moscow, yet as the shuffling line of idolising masses have filed past the dead dictator, few have realised that the actual body of Lenin was no longer there. What they were in fact worshipping was a plaster and plastic dummy.

***“Ignorant are those ... who pray to gods that cannot save.”*** Isaiah 45:20

The graves and shrines of Muhammad, Karl Marx, James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Martin Luther King, Elvis Presley, John Lennon, Princess Diana

and Nelson Mandela are also scenes of idolising of the dead. No one can claim that Europeans and Americans are free of ancestor worship! But like Buddha, Gandhi, Mao, Machel and Ceaucescu, these objects of worship are all dead.

***“Like a scarecrow in a melon patch, their idols cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them; they can do no harm nor can they do any good.”*** Jeremiah 10:5

However, in Jerusalem there is an empty tomb ...

## **Superstitions**

Some of the prevalent superstitions of the West - like touching wood, or stroking a rabbit's foot for luck, or not crossing a black cat's path - seem quite foolish and harmless. Some - like not walking under a ladder - seem to be quite practical. However, if a rabbit's foot was a source of good luck, it would still be on the rabbit.

It is a tragedy that some church denominations are also steeped in superstitions - worshipping statues and saints and holding masses for the dead.

However, the influence of the “New Age” movement has brought about an even more serious mysticism in society. More and more people are turning to fortune-tellers, clairvoyants and astrologers for guidance. Instead of seeking guidelines from the Word of God, many now turn to the stars, familiar spirits and demons. This present obsession with the occult does not bode well for Western civilisation.

***“Do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations... Let no-one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter... who practises divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord. . ”***

Deuteronomy 18:9-12

## **Witchcraft and Child Sacrifice**

The present explosion of occultism and satanism makes it clear that witchcraft is not confined to the primitive, but is prevalent among the sophisticated as well.

Ritual murders committed *“in Satan’s name,”* and cruel and perverted child abuse are becoming widespread.

Yet those of us who are disgusted at reports of child sacrifice by satanists should remember that, practically speaking, abortion is just a clinical and sophisticated form of child sacrifice. And while all civilised people are revolted at the practice of cannibalism - tens of thousands of aborted babies have been sold to cosmetic companies for use in beauty products.

As the Scripture declares:

***“People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”*** 2 Timothy 3:1-4

Mankind is in rebellion against God. Whether our disobedience to God is blatant or subtle, brutal or sophisticated, primitive or civilised - God’s Word is clear:

***“Now He commands all people everywhere to repent.”***  
Acts 17:30

***“Rid yourselves of all the offences you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die ... ?”*** Ezekiel 18:31

***“Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon.”*** Isaiah 55:7

***“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”*** Ecclesiastes 12:13



## Chapter 3

# A World at War Against God

*“Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?”* Psalm 2:1

Mankind is in rebellion to God. Mankind is seeking “*independence*” from our Creator; “*liberation*” from God; “*freedom*” from God’s Laws.

*“Let us break their chains they say and throw off their fetters.”* Psalm 2:3

This war against God takes many forms:

### **Islamic Persecution**

Islamic mobs have regularly burned down churches and murdered Christians in **Nigeria** and **Sudan**. In **Uganda**, hundreds of thousands of Christians were killed under the persecution of Muslim dictator Idi Amin in the 1970’s. In the **Sudan**, over two million people (most of them Christians) have died since 1956 in the ongoing vicious civil war between the Muslim Arab north and the mostly Christian Black south.

Shortly before Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, the government of Kuwait used its oil money to fund a project to buy up all the (subsidised) Bibles in **Nigeria** and burn them. Christians in Nigeria later pointed out that it wasn’t long afterwards that the oil wells of Kuwait were burning.

When an Afghan freedom fighter described to me the incredible sufferings that the Soviet invasion had inflicted on his people in **Afghanistan** - the millions of landmines, butterfly bombs, poison gas and booby trapped toys - I expressed my deep sorrow and sympathy. “No,” he shook his head. “*You must not feel sorry for us. We greatly persecuted Christianity in Afghanistan. In fact we bulldozed down the last Protestant Church in Kabul just one month before the Russians invaded on Christmas 1979. God is judging us for disputing with the people of The Book.*”

### **Communist Persecution**

I have seen literally hundreds of burned down churches, and have ministered to the survivors of many massacres in **Mozambique** and

**Angola.** Contrary to popular perceptions that communism is dead, Christians continue to suffer restrictions, harassment, imprisonment and martyrdom in **China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba** and other marxist controlled lands.

## **Humanist Persecution**

And even in the so-called “*Christian*” West one finds a war raging - against God and His standards. In **American** public schools the Bible has been banned, prayer made illegal and the scientific evidence for creation outlawed. Christians schools and home schoolers in several states have been prosecuted. Hollywood promotes the taking of the Lord’s Name in vain in most films, and regularly produces blatantly blasphemous films. And tens of thousands of Christians have been arrested for peacefully protesting the murder of unborn babies at abortion clinics.

On 26 March 1986, Joan Andrews walked into an abortion clinic in Pensacola and disconnected the plug on a suction machine. Despite the facts she did not break in (the door was open), that she did not damage any property, and neither did she resist arrest, Joan Andrews was sentenced to five years in a maximum security prison (with leave to appeal denied) - for seeking to save babies from abortion!

In a separate case, on the same day that Joan was sentenced to five years, and in the same courtroom, the same Judge Anderson sentenced a previously convicted felon to four years (with time off for good behaviour) for being an accomplice to murder!

In **Holland** not only are abortion, pornography, drug taking, euthanasia and homosexual marriages legal, it is now illegal for Christians to teach that homosexuality is wrong!

*“The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and His Anointed. . .”* Psalm 2:2

## **Meet the Persecutors**

Many of us may find it hard to believe that such things actually happen, that there are people who hate God and deliberately persecute His people. Let me introduce you to some persecutors whom I have met:

## **ZIMBABWE**

It was while preaching at a Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) base that I was confronted by a young soldier who shouted: *“Mugabe is my God! ‘A War of Liberation’ is my bible! ZANU is my church! And Communism is my religion! We are the masters of our own destinies!”* In response I pointed out to the soldiers that had gathered around us : *“You know that in your book a man speaks - but in the Bible - God speaks! Robert Mugabe is but a man - but Jesus ... He is God! Mugabe must one day die - but Jesus will never die! He is the One who will judge all men.”*

*“ZANU is a political party - but the Church is part of God’s Kingdom. Political parties rise and fall - but the Kingdom of God lasts forever. Politics change. ZANU is popular, here, with you, now - but in the future ... who knows? Once UNITA was considered your comrades - but not any more. Once ZAPU was popular - but not now. Why put all your trust in temporary, changing politics?- Rather trust in God ... His Kingdom will never be defeated.”*

*“Communism is man seeking to change his society - but Christianity is God reaching down and changing people. Communism does not give you eternal life. Marx cannot forgive sins. Lenin cannot lead you to Heaven - turn instead to Jesus. He alone can forgive sins, give us eternal life and lead us to God. Do not waste your life serving man-made politics. Use your life profitably and serve God.”*

Some of the soldiers showed great interest, but the one who had made the initial statement sulked off and radioed headquarters. Unknown to us, while my brother Derek and I continued for another hour, speaking to them about the Lord and giving Gospels to all in the camp, an ambush was set up for us on the road that we had to return on and some CIO (Central Intelligence Organisation) Security Police rushed over to arrest us.

We were separated and taken to their headquarters, where we were each interrogated individually. Derek and I soon took the opportunity to share our testimonies and the Gospel - with our interrogators eagerly asking us questions concerning Christ. By the time we were released most of them had asked for and received Bibles. As we drove out of their headquarters, our CIO interrogators waved goodbye to us whilst holding their new Bibles!

## ZAMBIA

During my imprisonment in Zambia in 1987 our Bibles were confiscated. It was during that time of being led blindfolded, barefoot and in chains, and later incarcerated in the overcrowded Lusaka Central Prison that I came to appreciate the importance of Bible memorisation. During the daily preaching and counselling opportunities we were dependent on the Word of God stored in our hearts and minds. Nevertheless, at each of my six interrogation sessions I requested that our Bibles be returned.

On one occasion a Special Branch interrogator pulled out a little red book and handed it to me. *“This is my bible,”* he said. *“This is the only bible you need here.”* Upon examining it I saw that it was an English translation of Mao Tse Tung’s Red Book. I gave it back to him. *“Mao cannot forgive your sins,”* I replied. *“Neither can Marxism lead anyone to heaven.”*

## MOZAMBIQUE

In 1989, after being captured in Mozambique by communist forces and flown by Soviet pilots to Machava Security Prison, I was escorted into an interrogation room. *“I am the devil!”* declared the SNASP investigator by way of introduction. *“Not only am I a Leninist, I am a Stalinist. I studied three years in Czechoslovakia!”*

*“Well, I am a Christian,”* was my reply.

*“I hate Christians!”* was his response.

The walls of each of the solitary confinement cells our team was imprisoned in bore eloquent testimony to the fact that he did not like Christians. The walls of our cells were covered in Christian messages scratched on with finger nails and little pieces of stone: *“Please God help me”*, *“Jesus is my Lord and Saviour”*, *“I have not eaten for 38 days”*, *“I have not seen the sun in 134 days”*, *“God is my refuge”*, many verses, some crosses and fish symbols. We were clearly not the first Christians imprisoned in those cells.

## ANGOLA

During ministry into Marxist Angola I have met survivors of SWAPO concentration camps and MPLA prisons. Each one related the horrific conditions and tortures which they had experienced. Some told how they had pleaded with their guards to get it over with and just kill them. In response their guards mocked them: *“We do not want to kill you and send you to heaven with God! No! We want you to curse Christ, and come to hell with us - for all eternity!”*



And that confirms my own conclusions on this subject. The purpose of persecution is not to kill Christians. Satan receives no benefit from sending believers to meet their Lord in heaven. The purpose of persecution is to intimidate Christians into compromise. It's to persuade Christians to give in to pressure, give up, stop evangelising and lose the joy of our salvation -to weaken and neutralise the Church.

***“Do not be afraid of those who can kill the body and after that can do no more ... Fear Him who, after the killing of the body can destroy both body and soul in Hell”*** Luke 12:4,5

## **Challenging God**

The first dictator of **Angola**, **Agestino Neto**, was described as a “*drunken, psychotic , Marxist poet.*” He was also a vicious persecutor of the Church. In 1975, after being installed by Cuban troops, Neto made a wild threat that “*Within 20 years there won't be a Bible or church left in Angola. I will have eradicated Christianity.*”

In the following years there were incidents of Cuban troops bursting into Church services and forcing people to spit on their Bibles or die. Churches were desecrated and congregations forced to bow in worship before Soviet Assault Rifles. “*From now on - god is this AK47. The gun has power over life and death. So worship it.*”

On 12 September 1977, Cuban troops interrupted the service at Chilesso Evangelical Church. They desecrated the church with the head of cattle and murdered pastor Aurelio Saunje in front of his congregation. As the church members fled they were shot in the back with Soviet machine guns. About 150 were killed. The Cubans then roasted the meat of the cattle using the church benches as firewood. They also burnt down the church building.

Yet as our Lord declared: “***I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***” Matthew 16:18

You cannot destroy the Church by burning buildings. The Church consists of people, people who love God, who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. On the other hand it is the Marxist rule of Agestino Neto which has been eradicated. Neto died in mysterious circumstances on an operating table in Moscow.

**“You shall break them with a rod of iron ...”** Psalm 2:9

Another persecutor of the Church who challenged God was **Samora Machel**, the first dictator of Marxist **Mozambique**. Samora Machel was a cannibal who ate human flesh in witchcraft ceremonies in the 1960's. He pledged his soul to Satan and vowed that he would destroy the Church and turn Mozambique into the first truly Marxist-Leninist state in Africa.

When the Portuguese government handed their colony into his blood-soaked hands, Machel declared war on the church. He called the priests “parrots”, the Christians “monkeys” and “apes,” and God he dismissed as “a pig.” Machel lashed out at the Church, accusing it of being “a remnant of colonialism,” “a tool of fascism,” and an “instrument of division.”

Thousands of churches in Mozambique were closed, confiscated, “nationalised”, chained and padlocked, burnt down or boarded up. Missionaries were expelled, some being imprisoned first. Evangelism was forbidden. Bibles were ceremonially burnt and tens of thousands of Christians, including many pastors and elders, were shipped off to concentration camps - most were never seen again. Shortly before his sudden death, Samora Machel (who incidentally had been knighted by Queen Elizabeth II) challenged God to prove his existence by striking him dead in sixty seconds. Before a large audience in a stadium in Maputo, Machel cursed God, blasphemed the Name of Jesus and whipped out a gold stop-watch and dramatically counted off sixty seconds before the shocked crowd. Then shouting contemptuously, “Times up!” Machel declared God dead and himself alive, amidst much applause.

Of course, Machel was not original: Lenin and Mussolini both gave God the same sixty seconds stop-watch treatment.

Machel's Soviet Tupolev aircraft crashed on 19th October 1986, killing all on board, while churches were specifically interceding for God to stop the persecution in Mozambique. And the marxist Frelimo and Zimbabwe plans for overthrowing the pro-western, Christian-oriented government in Malawi were discovered amidst the wreckage and exposed. This undoubtedly preserved Malawi from communism. Not only had God judged a persecutor and a blasphemer, but He had also saved a country from persecution.

**“You will dash them to pieces like pottery.”** Psalm 2:9

Another dictator who challenged God was Nicolae Ceaucescu, who severely persecuted the church in **Romania**. Ceaucescu (who had also been knighted by the Queen of England), was overthrown in a popular revolution and was executed on Christmas Day, 1989. Shortly after his demise, I had the privilege to minister in Golgotha Church, Arad, which had been confiscated, desecrated and turned into a bottling factory. Now, Golgotha is once again a dynamic centre of worship, fellowship and evangelism.

Richard Wurmbrand, who had suffered torture and 14 years imprisonment in communist *Romania* returned shortly after the Christmas revolution and purchased a now disused prison on the “*Avenue of the Victory of Socialism*.” Demonstrating to whom the real victory belongs, Richard Wurmbrand’s mission purchased a printing press (which previously was used to print marxist propaganda for the Stasi secret police in East Germany), moved the press to the old prison (which by now had become a warehouse for Bibles), and began to print Christian literature where Christians were once imprisoned for their faith. Outside, the huge statue of Lenin was overturned and transported to the garbage dump. In its place was set up a simple brass plaque which read: “*God bless Romania*.”

***“He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.”*** Psalm 2:4

Does the Lord God have a sense of humour? Most certainly yes!

The humanist philosopher Francois Marie Arounet - better known by his pen-name, Voltaire-was considered the father of the French Revolution. He boasted that he had destroyed the Bible. “*In a hundred years you will have to go to a museum to see what a Bible looked like*,” was his bold prediction.

Yet, in less than a hundred years the Bible Society bought his house and printing press, and began to print Bibles from Voltaire’s home! And in 1913, on the same day that one ancient copy of a Bible manuscript was sold for £250 000, the complete leather bound works of Voltaire were sold for 11 cents!

***“Then He rebukes them in His anger ... therefore, you kings be wise, O kings; Be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.”*** Psalm 2:5-11

Mankind is in rebellion to God. Mankind is shaking his fist of rebellion at God, and is waging a war against God, His laws and His people. Yet God is Sovereign and He is in control. Those who declare war against God will surely lose.

***“The Lord God tolerates no rivals; He punishes those who oppose Him... The Lord never lets the guilty go unpunished... The Lord is good; He protects His people in time of trouble. He takes care of those who turn to Him. Like a great rushing flood He completely destroys His enemies; He sends to their death those who oppose Him.”*** Nahum 1:2-8

The Creator and Eternal Judge is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

His ultimate victory is inevitable.

***“Ask of Me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession ... Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.”*** Psalm 2:8,12



## Chapter 4

# The Myth of Neutrality

***“He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me, scatters abroad”*** Matthew 12:30

### War Against God

We are involved in a world war of worldviews, a clash of civilisations. There is a systematic war being waged against Christian standards and our Christian heritage. Education has become a battleground. Entertainment and the news media are battlefields in this cultural war. This battle for the heart and battle for the mind involves far more than religious freedom and freedom of conscience. The future of Christian civilisation itself is at stake. Ultimately this is a war against God.

### The Idolatry of Compromise

Yet we live in an age of compromise and tolerance of evil where neutrality has been deified and lifted up as an idol. Some recent bizarre examples of why we need Reformation today include: St. Georges Cathedral, the premier church building in central Cape Town, advertised for Reformation Sunday - an interfaith service! This service included readings from the Qur’an and prayers by a Muslim Imam and a Jewish rabbi.

The Prophet Elijah challenged the people: ***“How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.”*** 1 Kings 18:21

### Celebrating Evil

A prominent church in Cape Town advertised *Nightmare – A Halloween party* for youth at their Sunday evening service! At a major Evangelistic conference in Cape Town, the Dean of the Cathedral greeted the people with the Islamic greeting: *“Salaam-Alaikum”!* and one of the youth choirs sang a hymn of praise to Nelson Mandela, along with clenched fists!

### Choose This Day

Joshua challenged the people to: ***“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you***

*dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!"* Joshua 24:15

## **The Mouth Speaks What the Heart is Full Of**

I attended a graduation service of a Christian university in Cape Town, where the biggest, longest and most repeated quotes were from Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Voltaire, Ghandi, and even from the atheistic, anti-God poem, Invictus! *"I am the master of my fate! I am the captain of my soul!"*

### **Who is the Master of Your Fate?**

The full quote by William Ernst Henley, in that fourth stanza, reads: *"It matters not how straight the gate, how charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul!"* It seems incomprehensible how any Christian can want to quote from such an obviously anti-Christ and anti-Biblical poem as Invictus! It is clear that the straight gate Henley is referring to is Jesus Christ, who is the Gate. The scroll that is charged with punishments is plainly the Bible.

### **Who is the Captain of Your Soul?**

What Christian, understanding the depravity of man and the Sovereignty of God, can dare to declare: *"I am the master of my fate! I am the captain of my soul!"* Yet, that was the quote given by the Chancellor of this Christian university to the graduating students!

*"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of this world, and not according to Christ."* Colossians 2:8

### **Who are we Honouring with our Words?**

During that three-hour graduation service, of what is meant to be a Christian university, I did not hear a single quote from a Reformer, a Church Father, Christian Theologian, a Missionary, or even from our Lord Jesus Christ, or His Apostles! The mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."* Romans 12:1-2

## **Conformed to the World**

In so many places we see evidence that, rather than changing the world, the church is being changed by the world. Instead of being transformed by the Word of God, all too many Christians today are being conformed to this world. At what are purported to be Christian colleges, I have frequently heard reinforced stereo-types, well-worn socialist mantras being repeated, tributes paid to modern political idols, stock phrases strung together with predictable, unimaginative jargon and repetition, of what you could get in any secular college, or for that matter, in a Hollywood film.

## **Inconsistent Neutrality**

Officials involved in this Christian university declared that they are “*neutral*” on the matters of abortion and creation. Yet they include faculty members who are pro-choice on the matter of abortion and who subscribe to Evolution. Despite their claims of neutrality, a highly qualified individual was rejected from consideration for the faculty because she was, in their words: “*a Creation theorist*”!

## **The Urgent Need for Reformation and Revival**

These are just a few sad examples that underline and highlight how desperately our churches need a Back to the Bible Reformation and a Heaven-sent Holy Spirit empowered Revival.

## **Who is to Blame?**

With all the moral chaos in our society, it is tempting to place most of the blame at the foot of Hollywood. The godless distortions of history and blatant promotion of perversion and blasphemy, from all too many of the studios in Hollywood have certainly played a major role in corrupting the morals and confusing the minds of multitudes. However, it would appear that godless humanism has done even more damage to the minds and morals of our population through the secular humanist schooling system.

## **Judgement Must Begin in the House of God**

However, having said that, it is my conviction that the real problem is not so much these external evils. Without in any way minimising their serious threat, secular humanism, communism, radical Islam and other false religions and ideologies are not really our main problem. The catastrophic collapse of Christian civilisation in recent years is probably far more to be laid at the steps of a backslidden, distracted, apathetic, compromising, worldly and, in all too many cases, apostate church.

## Defeat and Retreat

If the Christian Church was doing what our Lord Jesus Christ has plainly commanded in Scripture, then these false religions and anti-Christ ideologies would be in defeat and retreat. It is the basic failure of our churches to make disciples, teaching obedience to all things that the Lord has commanded, that lies at the root of this catastrophic situation. The salt has lost its savour. The light is being hid under a bushel. The last Command of Christ is not the first concern of most churches. The Great Commission is not the supreme ambition of most congregations.

## The Curse of Cowardice

Compromise and cowardice are pervasive. Evading controversial issues and seeking to please men, rather than God, has become the norm. It is the disgraceful failure of most churches that has enabled this triumph of secular humanism and paganism to hijack what were once great Christian colleges and countries.

## Come Out From Among Them

*“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the Temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore come out from among them and be separate’, says the Lord ‘and do not touch what is unclean and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters’, says the Lord Almighty.”* 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

## Double Standards

We are told to be tolerant of homosexuals, radical Islamists and abortionists, and then we are subjected to intolerance for holding to Biblical standards! The double standards and blatant hypocrisy of those who claim to stand for tolerance, yet exhibit incredible intolerance for Biblical Christianity is astounding!

## The Birth of a New Religion

We seem to be seeing the beginning of a new religion in our day. Songs of praise and hymns glorifying Nelson Mandela are being sung by choirs and



taught to schoolchildren. The ancient pharaohs were worshipped as gods. The chairmen of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, were elevated to cult status, particularly in the case of Vladimir Lenin, whose tomb continues to be a site of pilgrimage. When Joseph Stalin was dictator of the Soviet Union the cult of the chairman reached new heights, or rather depths.

### **The Ceausescu Cult**

In Romania, Communist Party General Secretary, Nicolae Ceausescu, became the focal point of emperor worship, such as the world had not seen since the days of the caesars. Over 8,000 hymns of praise were composed, honouring the communist dictator Ceausescu. Literally millions of his pictures adorned homes, offices, schools and government buildings.

### **Celebrity Cults**

Hollywood certainly has produced many celebrity cults. However, the extravagant praise and idolising of Nelson Mandela, even in churches, as a hero/martyr and ideal example, has exceeded all bounds. The mythology and idolatry surrounding the Mandela cult is startling.

### **The Mandela Cult**

Choirs have sung songs and hymns in praise of Nelson Mandela at major events. Concerts and events have been organised in his honour. Massive posters have been erected on civic centres. The Department of Education has apparently replaced education – teaching children how to think, with indoctrination – teaching children what to think.

### **Publicity Stunts**

In order to enable Nelson Mandela to be entered into the Guinness Book of Records, various publicity stunts have been promoted by the Department of Education. This has included requiring children of all ages, in the classroom, to write birthday cards to Nelson Mandela and to sing Happy Birthday to him on 18 July, to create new records.

### **An Abuse of Education**

School children have been required to write tributes and dedications praising Nelson Mandela. Despite the Ministry of Education admitting that over 90% of their schools are effectively dysfunctional, where entire provinces have not even received their textbooks in a whole year, it is

extraordinary how they manage to give such high priority to Mandela worship when they are failing to teach even basic educational skills in thousands of broken down and dysfunctional state schools.

### **Ignoring the Abortion Holocaust**

The Mandela cult is deeply disturbing on many levels. Are pro-life Christians expected to put their values to one side and deify the man who rammed through parliament, against all opposition, his Bill legalising abortion in South Africa? Over one million babies have been killed, officially, legally, in South Africa, with taxpayers money, since Nelson Mandela signed the Termination of Pregnancy Bill, 1 February 1997. Life begins at conception. Abortion is murder.

### **Ignoring the Pornography Plague**

The UN General Assembly may speak of Nelson Mandela's "*promotion of the rights of children and other vulnerable groups*", but under his presidency, pornography was legalised. The South African Police Services, Child Protection Unit, reported that child rape increased over 400% as a result.

### **Ignoring Support for Tyranny**

The UN General Assembly may claim that Nelson Mandela "*contributed to the struggle for democracy internationally and the promotion of a culture of peace throughout the world*", yet he closed down South Africa's embassy in the Republic of China on the island of Taiwan, and opened up South Africa's Embassy in Communist China, a one party dictatorship with a brutal human rights record.

### **Ignoring Support for Dictatorships**

Nelson Mandela welcomed to South Africa the longest reigning dictator in the world, Fidel Castro, and gave him the highest award this country could offer. Mandela also assembled both Houses of Parliament for Fidel Castro to address. A rare privilege. This, despite millions of Cubans having fled the oppression and tyranny of Castro's dictatorship. As president, Nelson Mandela uncritically supported some of the worst dictatorships on the planet, such as Castro's Cuba, Mugabe's Zimbabwe, Communist China, Gaddafi's Libya, Saddam Hussein's Iraq, and numerous other states notorious for their human rights abuses.

## **Ignoring the Exploitation and Abuse of Women for Profit**

The General Assembly Resolution may speak of Nelson Mandela's "*dedication to the service of humanity... gender equality...*", yet under him, pornography was legalised and prostitution effectively decriminalised. Human trafficking exploded in South Africa. Incidents of rape exploded exponentially as sex shops and pornography were, for the first time, allowed in South Africa.

## **Ignoring the Crime Wave Unleashed**

Under Nelson Mandela's presidency an average of 25,000 people were murdered each year. Yet, to celebrate his birthdays, Nelson Mandela would regularly open prison doors and set many convicted criminals, including armed robbers, murderers and rapists, free. Some of these were murdering and raping within 24 hours of being released! Well over 110,000 people were murdered under Mandela's term as president.

## **Cowardice and Hypocrisy**

However, we are meant to forget all these facts and shelve our pro-life, pro-family, moral, Christian convictions and bow before this new idol, singing a politicians praises and effectively burning incense before the image of this new caesar!

## **Christian Conviction and Courage**

Historically, Christians have refused to bow before any idol, nor give the worship due to the Creator alone to anyone else. Daniel ended up in the Lions Den. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace. Countless Christians were thrown to the lions in the arena for refusing to engage in the worship of the state leader of their day.

## **Indoctrination**

It would appear to be an abuse of education to require students to write a positive tribute, or dedication, to any political figure whom they, and their family, may have serious reservations about. Education is teaching one how to think, critically. Indoctrination is teaching one what to think.

*"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."* Ephesians 5:11

## **Refusing to Worship the State**

It is worth noting that Christians were not persecuted by the Roman

Empire for worshipping Christ. The Roman Empire was polytheistic. They had many gods. Christians were persecuted by the Roman state for refusing to worship Caesar!

## **Worship God Alone**

If the early Christians had operated by the standards of many modern Christians they would not have been persecuted at all. However, no Christian, in good conscience, can participate in idolatry. God, our Creator and Eternal Judge, is the only One who deserves our worship, praise and adoration.

*“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery... you, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.”* Galatians 5:1-13

## **The Worst Century of Persecution**

More Believers have died for Christ in the 20th century than in all the other 19 centuries combined. Over 42 million Christians were killed for their Faith during the 20th century, most by secular humanist, communist governments.

## **The Disgrace of Silence**

The most disgraceful aspect of recent Church history is the neutrality of much of the Church during this war against God. It is not just that most Christians have been guilty of silence during the decades of vicious persecution, it is the enthusiastic way many church leaders have publically supported communist dictators! Even sung their praises!

## **Collaborators with Communism**

Romanian, Polish, Angolan, Mozambican Christians, have often complained to me of the treachery of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). *“They sympathised with the communist persecutors – not with the persecuted Christians.”; “They seek to make collaborators out of the church!”; “They betrayed the uncompromising believers and collaborated with our persecutors.”*

## **Neutrality on Persecution**

Ecumenical and denominational church conferences regularly refused to

speak up against the persecutors of the Church. Evangelists visited the Soviet Union, China, Romania, Mozambique and North Korea, during times of intense campaigns of persecution, and declared that there was no persecution! They were then wined and dined by the atheist persecutors. Recent research has confirmed that, while they shook hands, laughed and exchanged pleasantries with their Marxist hosts, fellow believers were being imprisoned, tortured and killed by these Marxist dictators.

***“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful...”***

Psalm 1:1

## **Failure to Speak Up**

Christians in Sudan asked me why it was that bishop Desmond Tutu never spoke out for them while they were suffering intense, violent persecution at the hands of the Arab government in Sudan. For five decades Christians in South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains suffered unbearable persecution which left two million dead and more than five million homeless. Yet, apparently, many prominent church leaders preferred to remain neutral while Christians were being bombed and burned in Sudan.

## **Shameful Silence**

Similarly, while hundreds of churches have been attacked by radical Islamic terrorists in Northern Nigeria, and bombed and burned in Egypt by the Muslim Brotherhood, most church leaders have remained silent, passive and neutral.

***“Who will rise up for Me against the evildoers? Who will stand up for Me against the workers of iniquity?”*** Psalm 94:16

## **Neutrality on Abortion**

Over 63 million babies have been killed by abortion in America since 1973. Over one million babies have been killed by abortion in South Africa since 1997. World wide, this sophisticated child sacrifice of abortion claims an over 55 million victims – every year. You would think that all Christians would be in the forefront of the fight for the right to life of preborn babies. Yet it is shocking to find how many prominent church leaders claim neutrality on this issue of abortion. Why are Life Chains so poorly attended? Why do so many Christians sing the praises of the politicians who legalised abortion? Why do most Christians vote for political parties

that support abortion? Is that not being an accessory to murder?

*“Assuredly I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”* Matthew 25:40

## **Ideas Have Consequences**

Anyone who believes that education can be neutral is mistaken. Ideas have consequences. Actions flow from thought patterns. Parents are not faced with a choice between sending their children to a religious school, or to a non-religious school. All schools are inherently religious. Parents must rather choose which religion will be taught to their children. Will it be Roman Catholicism? Biblical Protestant Christianity? Islam? Secular Humanism? Or something else?

## **Humanism is Religious**

Secular humanism is a religion. It is a religion where prayer is illegal, but where pornography can be part of the sex education and values clarification syllabus. Secular humanism is a religion where evolution is an article of faith, a sacred cow. Scientific evidences for Creation are outlawed, even Intelligent Design has been expelled from secular humanist schools. All education is inherently religious, because it presents a certain perspective and selection of history, values and practices and it prescribes a worldview.

## **A Track Record of Failure**

Secular humanist education has proved to be one of the most effective ways to produce illiterates, lower moral standards and proliferate venereal diseases. Have secular schools failed? Traditionally governments have been hostile to education. Most governments preferred to have illiterate and uneducated populations which are easier to control. Throughout the millenniums, it has been the Christian Church which has championed education for all classes and both genders. Now the state has realised that they cannot stop everyone receiving education, so they want to control it. Yet one cannot trust any state with the moulding of the minds of future voters. It was Karl Marx, in his Manifesto of 1848, that first advocated state control of schools. Not that long ago the vast majority of schools in Africa were run by missions and churches. Today most of those schools are in the hands of the state. Some have pointed out that perhaps secular schools have not failed. If their true aim and objective has been to dumb down the next generation, then they have spectacularly succeeded!

## **The Dumbest Generation**

Dr. R.C. Sproul has commented that this could be the dumbest generation in history. To think that just a generation ago, high schools were teaching Greek and Latin. Now universities have to offer remedial English!

***“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up.”*** Deuteronomy 6:6-7

## **Blasphemous Neutrality**

When the Hollywood film, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, was first released in the mid 1970s, it was banned in South Africa. However, in 1983, a group of South African Council of Churches ministers saw the film at a special showing and urged that it be released! Many Christians were astounded that any ministers could endorse a film that portrayed our Lord Jesus Christ as a hippie, involved in an adulterous affair with Mary Magdalene, and with a denial of the Resurrection! In Cape Town I was shocked to see a large blasphemous distortion of The Last Supper artwork prominently displayed at the head of the stairs in the central area of what is meant to be a Christian university.

## **Pornographic Neutrality**

Like the South African Council of Churches, the American National Council of Churches (NCC), considers itself neutral on pornography and blasphemy. However, the NCC has gone even further and has spent much of its time, and church funds, promoting abortion (especially through its Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights – RCAR), and even the blasphemous, *Last Temptation of Christ*, which, in pornographic scenes, portrayed Christ as a coward and an adulterer, and Judas as a hero!

***“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”***

Matthew 16:26

## **Tolerating Propaganda for a Rape Culture**

Many Christians condemn human trafficking, but claim to be neutral on the issue of pornography and prostitution. However, those who condemn human trafficking should also condemn the pornography which is propaganda for a rape culture. Indeed, pornography markets and

creates the demand for prostitution and human trafficking. Pornography is the theory. Rape is the practise. No civilised country can tolerate the exploitation of women's bodies for profit through pornography and prostitution. All pornography is hostile to morality and law. The Bible teaches that we are our brothers keeper. Christians need to use their free market choices to influence economics – by avoiding shops that peddle porn and by supporting pro-family stores that are not only concerned with profits, but also principles.

***“It is impossible that no offences should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a milestone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.”*** Luke 17:1-3

## **Neutrality is Not an Option**

When the exiled people of Israel were facing a time of great crisis and danger, Mordecai reminded Queen Esther that she dare not choose to be neutral: ***“Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace... for if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise... from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”*** Esther 4:14

## **The Choice Before Us**

Almighty God is sovereign over the affairs of men. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. His ultimate victory is certain. We can choose to be part of His victorious army, or we can perish in disobedience.

## **Walking By on the Other Side of the Road**

Our Lord Jesus Christ made it clear, through the parable of the Good Samaritan, that neutrality is not an option. You cannot walk past an accident victim who is bleeding by the roadside and claim neutrality! Even if we decide to neither pass by on the other side, nor to make an effort to help, we cannot pretend to be neutral. Standing by while a person bleeds to death is not neutrality. Our passivity and inactivity can cause harm (Luke 10:25-37). ***“All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing!”***



## **The Will of Man Vs. the Word of God**

The Biblical doctrines of the Sovereignty of God and the depravity of man prove that neutrality is not an option. Jesus is Lord over all areas of life. In a fallen world, there can be no neutrality between the will of man and the Word of God.

### **Expose Apostates**

In the Lord's letters to the seven Churches of Revelation this point is emphasized time and again. Our Lord commended the Christians at Ephesus, because: *"I know your works, your labour, your patience and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not and have found them liars... but this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."* Revelation 2:2-6. The Nicolaitans taught that you could sin in the body, yet remain pure in the spirit.

### **Idolatry and Immorality**

The Church at Pergamum was rebuked by the Lord: *"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Baalam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth."* Revelation 2:14-16

### **Do Not Tolerate Evil**

To the Church in Thyatira, the Lord declared: *"Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds."* Revelation 2:20-22

### **Be Loyal to God**

The key message in these letters is the demand for loyalty and obedience. Compromise and tolerance of evil is condemned. Any possibility of neutrality is ruled out by our Lord.

## **The Lukewarm Laodiceans**

Those who seek to be neutral in the battlefields of life degenerate to the level of the lukewarm Laodicean church whom the Lord rebuked: ***“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth... As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”*** Revelation 3:15-19

**What issue are you trying to be neutral on?**

**What battlefield is God calling you to enter?**

**What stand is God calling you to take?**

***“But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*** Matthew 6:33



## Chapter 5

# The Danger of Inactivity

King David was an extraordinary soldier and a devout servant of the Lord God. Generally regarded as Israel's greatest king, and the author of many of the most loved Psalms and hymns, David had the unique privilege of being described by God as *"a man after [My] heart"* (Acts 13:22).

Yet, 2 Samuel 11 records the most disastrous fall into sin by David. It all began with these ominous words: ***"In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war. . . David remained in Jerusalem"*** 2 Samuel 11:1

The quickest way to destroy one's spiritual zeal is to respond to Biblical commands with apathy. It is a guaranteed pathway to spiritual disaster:

- When God speaks and we do not listen;
- What the Bible teaches, we do not apply;
- What God commands, we do not obey;
- Where God sends, we do not go.

There is a tremendous danger in passivity - Inactivity is deadly to spiritual life (Matthew 25:33-46). ***"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and does not do it, sins."*** James 4:17

Of course, on the opposite extreme, battle fatigue/burn out is another serious threat to healthy, balanced discipleship. Nevertheless, those who linger inactively at home, when they should be off to war, are easy targets for temptation. The devil finds evil work for idle hands. When God commissions us to fight then we dare not flinch from our duty.

***"Shall your countrymen go to war while you sit here?"***

Numbers 32:6

The sword is also a symbol of our faith (Hebrews 4: 12). We are to take ***"the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God"*** Ephesians 6:17 and ***"Fight the good fight of faith"*** 1 Timothy 6:12.

***"A curse on him who is lax in doing the Lord's work!  
A curse on him who keeps his sword from bloodshed!"***

Jeremiah 48:10

The most healthy habit we can cultivate is the practice of obeying God's Word and responding immediately to a call for action. True love shows itself in action (1 John 3:18). It is spiritually refreshing to step out in faith and obey God. The first time I heard the Gospel, I went forward and committed my life to Christ. The first time I heard a request for volunteers, I volunteered. When Scripture Union needed workers for a holiday mission; when the Sunday School needed another teacher; when posters needed to be put up to advertise evangelistic rallies; when counsellors were needed; and when I heard the first challenge to get involved in missions, I volunteered. And looking back, I am so glad I got involved on each of those occasions.

Responding to these calls with enthusiasm were the best things that I could have done. They were followed by spiritually testing times, sometimes tough times, always teaching times. They were used by the Lord to purge, purify and prepare me to be more prayerful and practical in the adventure of Christian discipleship. The first time I heard of the persecution of Christians in Mozambique - that there was less than one Bible for every thousand Christians in Mozambique

- I started to pray for Mozambique. Soon I was preparing to smuggle Bibles into that war-torn Marxist country. Before long, God had miraculously provided, guided and protected me all the way to the capital city, Maputo, and I was able to deliver the first shipment of Bibles Christians had received since the revolution. What a privilege it is to trust and obey our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

Responding to needs in obedience to the clear commands of Scripture - that is what Christianity is meant to inspire. Frontline Fellowship missionaries, overcoming all obstacles, delivered desperately needed Bibles and medicines to war ravaged Mozambique. Another of our workers, battling with malaria and vehicle breakdowns, walked for days to be the first to present the Gospel to inaccessible villages in the Zambezi valley. Several of our missionaries have swum across crocodile-infested rivers, to carry in, by hand, boxes of Bibles and medicines for Angola. We have driven across Africa and walked across the Nuba mountains to deliver Bibles, relief aid and to show the *Jesus* film in remote areas, because Christians in Sudan were suffering and were in need of help.

This is the essence of Christian love in practice. Overcoming all obstacles

and discouragements, enduring whatever suffering is required, making whatever sacrifices are necessary - persisting until the task is completed.

The best words of advice ever given were spoken by Mary. Referring to Jesus, she said: - ***“Whatever He tells you to do, do it!”*** John 2:5.

## **The Challenge of the Crusaders**

To this day, the Crusades of the Middle Ages remain a controversial and even an emotional issue. Strong views have been expressed both for and against the Crusades. Yet there is much we can learn from the faith that inspired those epic undertakings.

The fact is that the Crusades were a reaction to the Islamic invasion of the Holy Lands (those places where our Lord was born, lived, ministered, was crucified and raised from the dead). The Saracens (as the Muslim invaders were called) had desecrated Christian places of worship and were severely persecuting Christians. Pilgrims were being prevented from visiting those sites sacred to their faith.

Bernard of Clairvaux, the author of the classic devotional book ***“On Loving God,”*** urged Christians to join in the Crusades to liberate the Holy Lands from Islamic oppression: *“Our King Jesus is accused of treachery. It is said of Him, by the Saracens, that He is not God, but that He is falsely pretending to be something He is not. Any man among you who is His vassal ought to rise up to defend His Lord from the infamous accusation of treachery; he should go to the sure fight, where to win would be glorious and where to die would be gain. . . I ask you not to put your own business before the business of Christ.”*

Whatever we may believe about the Crusades, we have to admire the incredible devotion and steadfastness which inspired over 15 000 Crusaders (10% of whom were knights and 90% foot soldiers) to journey over 3 000 km and sacrifice life and limb to liberate Jerusalem. The first Crusaders were away from home for four years. Later Crusaders were away from home for up to 16 or more years. One widow sold the only thing she owned - her house - to pay for her only son to *“go and free Jerusalem.”*

Now I know that many will raise all kinds of protests and objections, but for myself, having studied the writings, prayers, and battles of many of the Crusaders, I am very impressed by the evident sincere devotion of many

of the Crusaders. Many were real Christians. They deplored their sins. They longed to do something noble and lasting for their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Their prayers, fasting, sacrifices, courage and devotion make our faith look juvenile.

They saw a need and they rose up to meet that need. They committed themselves to liberating the Holy Land and they steadfastly persisted to overcome all obstacles, dangers and discomforts for years, over thousands of miles - by foot or horseback - in inhospitable terrain until they reached their objective. At incredible cost they sacrificed and suffered unbelievable deprivations - hunger, thirst, boiling heat, freezing cold, storms, floods, fire and vicious hand to hand combat - to honour their commitments, to fight for their Lord and to defend the religious liberties of their fellow believers. I personally believe that the average Crusader knew more about Christianity than our average complacent, pew-warming church-goer of today!

In the book of Judges, Deborah asks: *“Why did you stay among the camp fires to hear the whistling for the flocks?”* She notes that *“there was much searching of heart,”* but Gilead *“stayed,”* Dan *“lingered,”* Asher *“remained,”* while *“the people of Zebulun risked their very lives. . . ‘Curse Meroz’ said the angel of the Lord. ‘Curse its people bitterly, because they did not come to help the Lord, to help the Lord against the mighty.”* Judges 5:16-18,23

Now, before anyone accuses me of attempting to launch a new crusade - I am not. However, I believe that we as Christians have the obligation to love our neighbours and this love must be shown in action. When Christian brothers are suffering persecution in China, Iraq, Sudan and elsewhere, we must respond in prayer and action. Publicise their plight. Alert other Christians to the crisis. Pray both privately and in public meetings for the persecuted. Mobilise pressure against the persecutors. Be generous in your support of those who are practically helping the persecuted. Encourage others to contribute whatever skills or resources they can towards helping those brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering. And if God calls you to personally go and serve His people in Sudan, North Korea, Cuba, Angola or wherever - then be prepared to respond with the same wholehearted enthusiasm as the Crusaders.



## Chapter 6

# Triumph Amidst Tribulation

### Are you prepared for persecution?

The Bible warns us: *“everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”* 2 Timothy 3:12.

Perhaps you will never suffer the vicious and violent persecution which the Christians in Sudan, Nigeria, Syria and Iraq are suffering at this time - but if we remain faithful to the Lord, then there will be times when we will be misunderstood, slandered, discriminated against, threatened and abused.

Jesus said *“If the world hates Me, they will hate you also”* John 15:18.

When Christ warned His disciples of the coming persecution (Matthew 16:21-26; 26:31-35) they responded with disbelief. Because they did not believe Christ’s warning they did not watch and pray. As a result they denied the Lord and ran away (Matthew 26:40-46, 56, 69-75).

Paul strengthened the disciples and encouraged them to remain true to the Faith by teaching: *“We must go through many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God”* Acts 14:22.

Jesus taught that many believers would forsake Him (Matthew 24:9-10) when trouble or persecution comes -because of a superficial commitment. Those with no roots in God’s Word would quickly fall away (Matthew 13:21).

In response to the clear warnings of these Scriptures and in the light of the present uncertainties it would be wise for every Christian to study what God’s Word has to say about persecution. We should build into our lives those principles and realities that enabled others to endure hardships for the cause of Christ.

The testimonies which follow are from my father-in-law, Rev. Bill Bathman, who has faithfully served the persecuted church for over 60 years. They were compiled from our conversations on several missions to Eastern Europe and are written from his perspective.

## Listening to the Persecuted

*“The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit, with the strong hand of the Lord upon me. I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Aviv near the Kebar River. And there, where they were living, I sat among them for seven days - deeply distressed.”* Ezekiel 3: 14,15

The first thing to do is to go where they are, to be with them where they live and to listen. Ezekiel was overwhelmed by what the exiles were suffering and so will we be - as we learn to listen. We need to be sensitive to the Spirit of God - to go where He wants us to go and to learn what He wants to teach us.

My first encounter with persecution was from the testimony of Missionaries in Columbia in the 1950's, where Roman Catholics were gouging out the eyes of some Protestants for reading the Bible. Then in 1958, I learned of the Catholic persecution in Spain. A mob stabbed a Protestant believer in the streets, in broad daylight. A Roman Catholic priest stood over him, sucking on a cigarette and not raising a finger to help him while he bled to death.

There was a tremendous shortage of Bibles in Spain and an overwhelming response to the radio broadcasts from Trans World Radio. When we listened to the believers in Spain, they asked for Bibles and requested more Bible teaching over the radio.

In October 1961, I was asked by Trans World Radio to visit communist Yugoslavia to collect tapes from a pastor who had recorded sermons for broadcasting in the local languages. As I sought the Lord before this assignment, the Lord impressed upon me Revelation 3:8: ***“Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it”***

As I drove into Yugoslavia, the Lord guided me as to what to say and what not to say, to be polite and to answer only what was asked of me and no more; not to ask directions but only to use maps and personal discovery; not to park outside - or near - the home of our contacts; to be discreet and cautious.



My first contact in Yugoslavia, Dr Josif Horak, welcomed me enthusiastically. His words came like a commission from the Lord: *“You must come back! Even if the door is closed - try it, to see if it’s locked.”*

We learned to trust God at every step. We never took any trip for granted. Every border crossing was a miracle. We would pray: *“Lord, we did not ask for this assignment but if You want us to deliver these Bibles to Your people behind the Iron Curtain, please work a miracle.”* And during the 38 years I’ve been ministering behind the Iron Curtain we have delivered tens of thousands of Bibles safely.

Whenever we asked what we could do, the believers replied, *“We need Bibles.”* In the 1960’s over 75% of the Baptist pastors in Romania did not even possess their own copy of the Bible.

Often we found congregations without even a single Bible. Sometimes the only Bibles available were handwritten copies. Christians would share single pages of the Bible, swapping their pages for others at church. Many times I was told:

*“We can never receive enough Bibles.”* The need was so great.

Often we were asked: *“Do the Christians in the West pray for us?”*

With a heavy heart I had to admit, *“Most do not even know that you exist.”*

One pastor whom I often visited in 1962 was Aran Jhlovich in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. His 36-year-old son, who was also a pastor, had been arrested by Tito’s police a short while before. They told him to renounce his faith. He would not. In front of his father they had forced him to his knees and shot him in the back of the head. Aran saw his son’s forehead explode and fall to the ground.

The communists threatened Pastor Jhlovich: *“Everything you do for Jesus is against the state.”*

*“Then I will go on being against the state,”* Aran replied. *“Until you do to me what you did to my son.”*

This pastor continued to translate Christian books into Serbo-Croatian. And we continued to smuggle out these manuscripts for publication. Pastor Jhlovich continued to faithfully serve the Lord until his death.

In 1967, I met the famous hymnist and pianist, Nicolae Moldoveanu, in Sibiu, Romania. His hands were disfigured because the communists had broken every bone in every finger of each hand because he loved to play the piano and organ to the glory of the Lord. He had spent years in prison for his music ministry. While in prison, without musical instruments and without pen and paper, he had composed and committed to memory an average of a hymn a day. Today his hundreds of hymns are sung in almost every church in Romania.

I also learned that persecution is not only murder, torture or imprisonment but discrimination in education and employment. Higher education, and therefore better job prospects, were consistently denied to Christians and to the children of Christians. Immense pressure was placed on children to join the communist party youth and become atheists. As Joseph Tson of Romania explained, *“If you obeyed, you got privileges. If you disobeyed, you were punished.”*

Dr. Nic Gheorghita, a distinguished endocrinologist in Romania, was confronted by the local authorities: *“You must choose between your God and your government.”* They threatened him: *“This is the post-Christian era. Your career is at stake. . . You have 30 days to choose!”*

*“Gentlemen,”* Dr. Nic replied, *“I do not need 30 days. Nor do I need 30 minutes. Nor even 30 seconds. I can tell you this moment: **I choose my God.**”*

The communist officials were furious and threatened to *“terminate”* him. As he stood firm in his Faith, they changed tactics and refused Dr Nic’s daughter any further education - even though she was an honours student. As Romania was a socialist country, there was no alternative source of education. She later fled the country to study in the USA.

In 1974, when Joseph Tson was the Baptist pastor in Ploiesti, Romania, the communists threatened him: *“Do not you know that we have the power to kill you?”*

*“Yes, you have the power of force,”* replied. Joseph, *“but we Christians have a weapon - sacrifice. And our weapon is superior to yours. **We are God’s army of lambs.**”*

In the Hindu country of Nepal, the king was offended by conversions to Christ and so the Hindu officials regularly imprisoned and beat Christians.

In 1987, I attended a conference for (foreign) Christian leaders in Katmandu, Nepal. When the International Hotel refused to accommodate such a gathering, a local pastor hosted the conference. Two hours after the delegates left, the pastor was arrested, and jailed.

Only consistent international prayer, publicity and pressure brought about his release less than a month later, but he was then exiled from the country of his birth. When I spoke to him, this pastor replied : *“It is our privilege to suffer for Jesus.”*

## **Learning from The Persecuted**

***“I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You.”*** Psalm 119:11

Persecuted Christians place much importance on heart knowledge of the Scripture. Our dear friend Sabina Wurmbbrand told us that before she was arrested in Romania she was very poor. But while in prison she became very rich.

As a pastor’s wife she was not well off with this world’s goods, however, she was rich in the only currency that mattered in prison - the Word of God. Because she had stored up such spiritual treasures through Bible memorisation, Sabina Wurmbbrand was able to make fellow prisoners rich in the Word of God.

The persecuted churches of Eastern Europe placed a high priority on Scripture memorisation. Many congregations had corporately memorised the entire Bible. At any given service the pastor could call upon some member to recite from memory any chapters of those books of the Bible which he had been assigned to memorise.

Some Christians had wrapped a spare Bible in a plastic bag and buried it in anticipation of later confiscation. Often I came across families engaged in writing out the whole Bible by hand. When Bibles were very scarce precious copies were rotated amongst members of the congregation. Many families then used their night to copy as much of the Bible as possible - by hand. Most Christians had memorised a wide selection of hymns and chapters of the Bible.

Many thousands of pastors were removed from their positions and

forbidden to preach by the communist authorities. Some were reappointed by their congregation as the caretaker or as a deacon and regularly asked to “*share*” in the services. Instead of preaching from behind the pulpit they “*shared*” from the Word of God and prayed from in front of the pulpit.

When the communist authorities closed down, or heavily restricted Bible colleges and theological seminaries, some churches began an informal underground training courses. In **Romania**, one thousand Baptist congregations were only allowed to train 5 theological students every four years.

Second Baptist Church (now Emanuel Baptist Church) in Oradea, started “*The School of the Prophets*” which trained ministers with intensive lectures after working hours in the evening. The School of the Prophets graduated over 50 ministers/evangelists a year.

When a church in the centre of Talin, **Estonia** was closed down, the people met in the street outside the church and held a protest service in the road. In the chaos caused by the blocked traffic the authorities reopened the church building.

An Estonian church was forbidden to have more than one service on Sunday they responded by holding an 11 hour church service - from 9:30am to 8:30pm! And the youth stayed on for 1½ hours longer singing choruses. Others had joined the service an hour earlier for prayer.

When the Marxists wouldn't allow a religious youth camp or rally, the youth organised a “*Peace Conference*.” I preached at this youth weekend on “*Jesus the Prince of Peace*,” “*My peace I give unto you*” and other appropriate peace verses.

When they were thrown in jail, Christians sang praises to God and evangelised the other prisoners and many more were converted. When the secret police attempted to infiltrate spies into the congregation, the Christians would use the system for evangelistic purposes. Knowing that these spies would have to present a full report of what was said they were careful to clearly present the way of salvation.

When some false believer attempted to ingratiate himself with Sabina Wurmbrand she asked him: “*Before you continue, will you please lead us in prayer.*” After his awkward silence and clumsy attempt, Sabina chided

him: “Now, do not you feel ashamed of yourself? Let me tell you how you can become a real Christian.”

The persecutors know that a chain is only as good as its weakest link. Those Christians who were weak were the ones on whom the marxists would prey, pressurising them for information, persuading them to compromise. Knowing this danger the Christians would feed potential informers harmless or misleading information. Occasionally they would test security leaks with “*marked*” information which if acted upon would conclusively reveal who the “*leak*” was. They would continue to pray for the traitors - overcoming their betrayal with Christian love.

On my first visit to Bucharest, **Romania**, I met Rev Alex Popovici. “*Pache*” (Peace), we exchanged Christian greetings in the dark passageway outside his apartment. “*You are an angel come from God*”, he said. Alex was about to be exiled and he needed me to smuggle out his manuscript on the history of the Baptists in Romania.

He then told me that he had just baptised two people in his bath tub - wearing a mask. Alex chose to baptise whilst wearing a mask so that those he baptised could in all honesty tell any interrogator that they had not seen who baptised them.

As our Lord Jesus warned us: “***be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves***” Matthew 10:16.

We also learned that the persecuted are not all in prison. The psychological and emotional suffering can be worse than physical torture. Hebrews 11:35-37 describes some of the suffering of God’s people: torture, imprisonment, flogging, execution, destitution, mistreatment, and cruel mockings. Cruel mocking? Yes, lies about loved ones were told to devastate prisoners. By hurting their families the marxists subjected the prisoners to the most severe torment possible.

On one pastor’s uniform was written a “0” “*You are a zero*” they told him. “*You are a nobody, a nothing.*” “Yes,” he replied “*I am a zero but Jesus Christ stands with me and a ‘1’ in front of a ‘0’ equals a ‘10.’*”

## Serving the Persecuted

***“Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.”*** Hebrews 13:3

For the last 50 years I have had the privilege of serving the persecuted Christians in Eastern Europe. This ministry involved smuggling in - Bibles and other Christian literature - and it involved smuggling out written manuscripts for publication and taped messages for radio broadcasts.

Along with the Bibles we delivered grocery items and financial gifts to the wives of imprisoned pastors, destitute families and other needy believers. We also delivered medicines, spare parts for vehicles and equipment and any other practical items which could help their families and ministries.

Tape recorders enabled pastors to multiply their messages and helped launch preaching points in many villages. Vehicles enabled soul winning pastors to care for more churches and hold more services.

My first contacts in Eastern Europe came from refugees who had fled communist rule. We learned not to endanger our contacts by asking directions to reach their addresses. **The danger from spies and informers could not be overestimated.**

Once having found the apartment block we would keep driving and park about a kilometer away. For a Western car to park nearby a residential area would have been too conspicuous and would have invited suspicion from the communist police or “*street committee*.”

Wearing similar clothing to the local people, or an East European type of overcoat, we could merge with the crowds. Ensuring that we were not being followed, we would carefully walk back to the contact address. Upon entering the apartment building, we would climb the stairs, checking the doors on each landing for the name of the family we were looking for. When we found it, we counted the steps down to the street level.

Later that night, we would return and walk quietly up the stairs in the dark. We knew exactly how many steps because we’d counted them in the daylight. Residents or visitors would push a button to activate the light in the stairwell. The switch always made a loud sound as it started a timing

mechanism that would turn off the light in about a minute. This would be loud enough to alert the local informer to observe who was visiting and who was being visited.

Those who want to serve the persecuted need to be considerate -to learn to be circumspect. We do not want to make their lives any more difficult.

One way in which we have been able to help the persecuted is through pressure. By sending letters and telegrams of support to those suffering harassment or persecution we were able to let the persecutors know that the pastor, family or congregation they were targeting was well known, loved, and supported, and that we were watching. **Publicity provided protection for the persecuted.**

One also needs wisdom and discernment to serve the suffering. One year, eight mission teams were intercepted at the border by communist secret police. Their vehicles and Bibles were confiscated. When the various missions got together to find the security leak, it was found that a spy in the British and Foreign Bible Society in London had sabotaged the smuggling trips.

It became apparent that when purchasing quantities of Bibles in East European languages, one should use different vehicles and personnel than those who would undertake the border crossings. **Strict security needed to be maintained concerning dates, routes and contacts.**

On another occasion, the Marxists achieved a **double propaganda victory** by announcing that 100 000 Bibles would be printed in Romania. What was **not** published was the fact that the Bibles printed had to be in the most archaic translation - virtually incomprehensible to young Romanians. The news headlines in the West seemed to prove that Bibles were no longer banned in Romania. And the Bible translation seemed to prove to Romanians that Christianity was an obsolete religion - only for old people.

In addition the conditions imposed on the Bible Society by the Romanian government included the following: Only 10 000 copies could be printed each year. Only pre-paid orders from registered members of Orthodox (WCC affiliated) churches could obtain these Bibles. The paper and ink had to be imported with extravagant import duties. The communist printers were paid by the Bible Society to print the Bibles. And the Bibles

were still sold by the Marxists - who pocketed the profit themselves!

Most church goers in the West never learned the details of this deal and only noticed the misleading headlines. The prevalent false impressions served the purposes of the persecutors and caused a major drop in support for those missions who were ministering behind the Iron Curtain.

When we began our mission to serve the persecuted churches behind the Iron Curtain most of the pastors did not even have their own copy of the Bible. On each trip we carried 75 to 250 Bibles - depending on available space and other considerations. In a short time every pastor had his own copy of the Word of God. We then began to concentrate on getting a Bible to every Christian family.

Our loads multiplied and the risk factor increased. The border guards began to ask: *“Do you have any guns? Do you have any drugs? Do you have any pornographic materials? Do you have any Bibles?”* Often they dismantled vehicles and searched through every item of luggage for *“contraband”*. We had many close calls and incidents of answered prayer. By the grace of God we never lost a Bible. They were all safely delivered.

*(The above testimonies all came from my father-in-law Rev. Bill Bathman, the Founder of NETWORK, The Pioneers and In Touch Mission International).*

## **THRIVING IN SPITE OF PERSECUTION**

***“They overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”*** Revelation 12:11

Over the last 33 years of ministering in Mozambique, Angola, Romania, Albania, Rwanda and Sudan where severe persecution has raged I have learned that it is possible not only to survive persecution - but to thrive in spite of it. The more we build the following twelve principles into our lives, the better prepared we will be to triumph amidst tribulation:

### **1. The Sovereignty of God (Psalm 2)**

God is all knowing, all powerful and everywhere present. He is sovereign over the affairs of men and His Will will ultimately be done. Those who fight against God will lose. We may not know the future but we do know Him who holds the future. ***“If we share Christ’s suffering we will also share His glory.”*** Romans 8:17



## 2. Bible memorisation (Psalm 1:2-3)

Our most precious possession is the Word of God. Therefore we are urged to *“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. . .”* Col 3:16. Persecutors may be able to confiscate your Bible, but they cannot take away the Word of God that is stored up in your heart and mind. Every Christian who has ever suffered imprisonment, especially in solitary confinement, will agree that the Lord used their Scripture memory verses as an inexhaustible source of refreshment, encouragement and strength. ***“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.”*** Romans 10:17

## 3. Prayer is your lifeline (2 Thessalonians 3:1-5)

In the midst of suffering, only the reality of God in our lives will enable us to stand firm. Our personal relationship with the Lord is the root source of our strength and courage. Therefore, we need to cultivate our devotional life. ***“After they prayed ... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly.”*** Acts 4:31

## 4. Fear God and not man (Deuteronomy 10:12-13)

The fear of man is a trap. People-pleasers make traitors (John 5:44). To fear the Lord frees us from the fear of man. There is only one God - but there are many men. It is better to fear the one true God than to be enslaved to the fear of men (Galatians 1:10). ***“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him.”*** Luke 12:4,5

## 5. Stand firm. Do not compromise on principle (Phil. 1:27-29)

Joseph, David and Daniel risked everything by refusing to compromise their principles and their obedience to the plans and purposes of God. As a result they suffered persecution. Yet their faith remained steadfast. They persevered and God raised them up to rule over the land. (Gen. 39-41; 1 Sam. 18-2; Sam. 2; Dan. 6). We too need to be steadfast and remain faithful to the Word of God. ***“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.”*** Ephesians 4:14

## **6. Exercise your faith (Hebrews 11:1,32-39)**

By faith God's people can turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones, crisis situations into opportunities, battles into victories (Rom 8:28). We are "*more than conquerors*" (Rom 8:37) and "*overcomers*" (1 John 5:4) through Christ. Yet, just as we need to exercise our bodies to maintain and increase our physical strength, so too we need to test our faith - putting it under stress and strain in training for godliness. You do not start studying the day the examination begins. Nor do you start training on the day of the race. So too we cannot begin strengthening our faith on the day of crisis (1 Tim 4:8). "***Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.***" 1 Corinthians 9:25

## **7. Discipleship training of every member (2 Timothy 2:2)**

Hierarchical churches with a clergy/laity division are easily infiltrated, manipulated and neutralised. Top heavy structures are easily decapitated by merely imprisoning the leaders. However, the churches that have flourished under persecution have invariably been those congregations with lay leadership. When every member is either discipling others or being discipled themselves then the church can remain effective - even under persecution. "*Each one reach one, each one bring one, each one teach one*" is a winning strategy. Evangelism can add to the church, but discipleship can multiply. "*The whole church, taking the whole Gospel, to the whole world.*" "***To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the Faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.***" Ephesians 4:12-13

## **8. Home Bible study groups and prayer cells (Acts 2 :42-47)**

In times of state persecution, church leaders can be imprisoned and church buildings can be confiscated or closed. However, it is always a far harder task to stamp out home Bible study groups and prayer fellowships! Congregations that depend upon their formal services in the church building are vulnerable. But congregations which consist of a network of prayer and Bible cell groups are far more resilient in times of stress. "***Greet also the church that meets at their house.***" Romans 16:5

## **9. Evangelise or fossilise (Luke 24:47)**

We must never allow persecution to deter us from obeying the Great

Commission. Our purpose on earth is to “*make disciples. . . teaching obedience*” Matt. 28:19. The lifeblood of the persecuted church is zeal to reach the lost for Christ. Every interrogation is an opportunity to witness for Christ. “***I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.***” Romans 1:16

### **10. Pray the Imprecatory Psalms (Acts 13:8-12)**

One of the most striking aspects of persecuted churches is their love for the Psalms. While we tend to pray for peace, the persecuted pray for justice (Rev 6:9-11). “***When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.***” Proverbs 21:15

### **11. Be careful whom you trust (Matthew 24:4-5)**

In times of state persecution, churches will be infiltrated by spies and even established members could be recruited (blackmailed into being informers). Therefore, one would need to learn to no longer be too specific in testimonies and prayer requests. Some aspects of the church would have to be on a “*need to know*” basis. “***Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient.***” Ephesians 5:6

### **12. Cultivate a positive attitude of praise and thanksgiving (Philippians 4:4-9)**

Knowing the great God we serve and the inevitable victory of His Kingdom (Daniel 2:44), we need to continually count our blessings and rejoice. “***Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.***” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



## Chapter 7.

# Changing the Course of History - By Prayer

In the daily battles of life one can be tempted to give in to depression or fatigue as we see sin and compromise increasing. Yet there is hope. God is Sovereign. Nothing is inevitable except what God has decreed. And there is power in prayer.

### Called to Victory

Christians are not doomed to defeat but called to victory. If God can change us then He can use us to change some part of this world. Christians can actually change the course of human history by prayer and obedience to God. The Bible is full of examples of believers “*who through faith conquered kingdoms.*” Hebrews 11:33. And recent history confirms the power of prayer.

### Praying for Communist China

Shortly after I was converted to Christ early in 1977, I remember a missionary from Overseas Missionary Fellowship urging us to pray for God to open the doors to **Red China**. Even as we prayed my heart was filled with unbelief - how could a communist country like China ever be open to the Gospel again? Yet we have seen how Mao Tse Tung died, how his little “*Red Book*” became discredited and how the doors to China have been gradually opening since.

Not that China is at all free -the brutal massacre of thousands of unarmed civilians in Peking’s Tiananmen Square shows that communism is still in control - but the doors have opened. In 1977 many questioned if the Church had survived the “*Cultural Revolution*” and vicious persecution. Now we know that there are well over 100 million Christians in China! And millions of Bibles have been safely delivered behind the *Bamboo Curtain* since.

## Against All Odds in Mozambique

When I first started praying for **Mozambique** in 1981, it was firmly closed to the Gospel. Many of my friends thought I was foolish to try to enter Marxist Mozambique on my motorbike, laden with a thousand Gospels and Bibles and the “Jesus” film. Yet God opened the doors time and time again and we managed to deliver tons of Bibles and relief aid and show Christian films throughout that war torn Marxist country which is now open to the Gospel. When we began in 1982 only 4% of Mozambique was Christian. Today 34% of Mozambique belongs to Protestant, Evangelical or Pentecostal churches.

## War Against God in Angola

As the persecution of Christians in **Angola** escalated under the marxist dictator, Agestino Neto, we prayed for God to intervene. Shortly after Neto declared that: “*Within 20 years there will not be a Christian left in Angola. I will have eradicated Christianity!*” Neto died in mysterious circumstances on an operating table in Moscow. His successor, Dos Santos, showed a marked lack of enthusiasm in continuing Neto’s wave of church burning.

## Challenging God

In 1986, as Samora Machel’s brutal persecution of Christians in Mozambique intensified, we published “*The Mozambique Report*” and “*In the Killing Fields of Mozambique*” and launched a campaign of prayer for the suffering Christians there. Although there seemed to be no hope - we continued to trust God to intervene and stop the bloodbath. Suddenly, in October 1986, the dictator’s Soviet Tupolev aircraft crashed in the midst of a storm. A month earlier, Machel had publicly cursed Christ and challenged God to prove His existence by striking him dead. When, after 60 seconds nothing had happened, Machel declared that “*God is dead! But I am alive!*” Now the persecutor is dead and God is clearly alive. Although much suffering continued, Mozambique officially renounced marxism and allowed some measure of freedom to many churches - especially in the cities. And Missionaries at last were allowed to evangelise in Mozambique again. The atheistic persecutors of the Church had to acknowledge defeat.

## The Fall of the Wall

When I first saw **the Berlin Wall** in March 1988, and the crosses in memory of those who had been shot in the back, whilst fleeing from socialism - I wept. I prayed, as did so many others, that God would break down this evil

structure even as He had demolished the walls of Jericho. Yet how amazed I was when our prayers were answered in 1989, and millions poured over the border for their first look at the other half of their city and country.

### **The Overthrow of Communism in Romania**

When my wife, Lenora, and I visited **Romania** in early 1989, we experienced the oppression of communism and witnessed the tyranny of Ceaucescu. Along with millions of others - we prayed. And before the year ended we saw Ceaucescu executed, communist symbols smashed and God's Word openly proclaimed in the public squares of Romania. Now Romania was not immediately free - "*ex-communists*" hijacked the revolution and dominated the new government - but the churches experienced dramatic new opportunities to serve God. Millions of Bibles flooded in during the succeeding years, and the Gospel has made great advances in the lives of millions of Romanians.

### **The Defeat of Atheism in Albania**

**Albania** had declared itself the first fully atheist state in the world in 1966. Yet in answer to prayer the communist government of Albania was forced to re open many churches in 1990. Oppression continued but tens of thousands packed the few open churches each week until the communist regime was overthrown. Those who declare war on God will surely lose.

***“The Lord will be awesome to them when He destroys all the gods of the land. The nations on every shore will worship Him, every one in their own land.”***

Zephaniah 2:11

***“Ask of Me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.”***

Psalm 2:8



## Chapter 8

### Praying for Justice

To those of us involved in ministering to Christians suffering persecution the imprecatory Psalms are a tremendous source of comfort. Those of us who are fighting for the right to life of the preborn, or battling social evils such as pornography or crime, are beginning to appreciate what an important weapon God has entrusted to us in the imprecatory Psalms. This study will help inspire and guide the prayers of your family and congregation:

#### The Imprecatory Psalms

When I first encountered the prayers for judgement in the Psalms I was quite at a loss to know how to respond to them. Prayers such as:

***“Break the arm of the wicked and evil man; call him to account for his wickedness...”*** Psalm 10:15 did not seem consistent with the gospel of love which I had accepted. Yet Psalm 10:15 was clearly motivated by love for God (***“The Lord is King forever and ever; the nations will perish from His land”*** 10:16, and ***“Why does the wicked man revile God?”*** 10:13), and by love for the innocent who suffer (***“You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; You encourage them, and You listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.”*** 10:17-18.)

#### The Wrath of God

Nevertheless, I grew increasingly uncomfortable reading such graphic prayers for God to judge the wicked as: ***“Pour out your wrath on them; let Your fierce anger overtake them”*** 69:24; ***“O Lord, the God who avenges, O God who avenges, shine forth. Rise up, O Judge of the earth, pay back to the proud what they deserve.”*** 95:1-2; ***“Break the teeth in their mouths, O God... let them vanish like water... let their arrows be blunted... The righteous will be glad when they are avenged, when they bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked. Then men will say, ‘Surely the righteous still are rewarded; surely there is a God who judges the earth.’”*** 58:6-11

Certainly I wanted God to be honoured and yes I was deeply distressed by the prevalence of evil - but could I actually pray for God to pour out His wrath on the wicked?

## How are these Prayers to be Prayed?

The Scriptures make it clear that these prayers are not to be prayed for our own selfish motives, nor against our personal enemies. Rather they are to be prayed in Christ, for His glory and against His enemies. The psalmist describes the targets of these imprecations as: those who devise injustice in their heart and whose hands mete out violence (58:2); those who **“boast of evil”** and **“are a disgrace in the eyes of God. Your tongue plots destruction, it is like a sharpened razor, you who practice deceit. You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth.”** 52:1-3; **“They crush your people... They slay the widow and the alien; they murder the fatherless.”** 94:5-6; **“With cunning they conspire against Your people; they plot against those You cherish.”** 83:3; **“You hate all who do wrong. You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the Lord abhors.”** 5:5-6.

To those unrepentant enemies of God, the psalmist declares: **“Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin”** 52:5; **“Surely God will crush the heads of His enemies... of those who go on in their sins”** 68:21.

## The Purpose of these Prayers

And the purpose of these prayers for justice is declared: **“Then it will be know to the ends of the earth that God rules...”** 59:13; **“to proclaim the power of God”** 68:34; **“All kings will bow down to Him and all nations will serve Him”** 72:11; **“Who knows the power of Your anger? For Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due You.”** 90:11

Yet despite the fact that 90 of the 150 Psalms include imprecations (prayers invoking God’s righteous judgement upon the wicked) such prayers are rare in the average Western church. However, amongst the persecuted churches these prayers are much more common.

## Praying Against the Persecutors in Angola

Amidst the burned out churches and devastation of Marxist Angola I found the survivors of communist persecution - including the crippled and maimed, and widows and orphans praying for God to strike down the wicked and remove the persecutors of the Church. I was shocked - yet it was Biblical (Even the martyrs in Heaven pray **“How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until You judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?”** Revelation 6:10).



The initiator of the communist persecution in Angola was Agestino Neto. Described as a drunken, psychotic, Marxist poet, Neto had been installed by Cuban troops as the first dictator of Angola. He boasted that: Within 20 years there won't be a Bible or a church left in Angola. I will have eradicated Christianity. Yet despite the vicious wave of church burning and massacres it is not Christianity that was eradicated in Angola but Agestino Neto. Neto died in mysterious circumstances on an operating table in Moscow.

## **Persecutors Judged in Romania**

In Romania I learnt of a series of remarkable incidents recorded of God judging the persecutors of the Church in answer to prayer:

- A communist official ordered a certain pastor to be arrested. The next day the official died of a heart attack.
- Another communist party official ordered that all the Bibles in his district were to be collected and pulped, to be turned into toilet paper. This blasphemous project was in fact carried out. But the next day when the official was medically examined, he was informed that he had terminal cancer. He died shortly afterwards.
- On another occasion, a communist official who had ordered a Baptist church to be demolished by bulldozers died in a car crash the very next day.
- When an order was given to dismantle a place of worship on the mountainside in a forest, the workmen flatly refused to carry out the order. At gunpoint a group of conscripted gypsies also refused to touch the church. In desperation, the communist police forced prisoners at bayonet-point to dismantle the structure. Yet the officer in charge pleaded with the local Christians to pray for him, that God would not judge him. He emphasised that he had nothing against Christians and was only obeying strict orders. The building was in fact reconstructed later, and again used for worship.

***“They were all seized with fear and the Name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour... in this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.”*** Acts 19:17,20

Nicolae Ceausescu the dictator who ordered much of the persecution in

Romania was overthrown by his own army and executed on Christmas day, 1989, to joyous shouts of “*the anti-Christ is dead*” in the streets. Many testified that this was in answer to the fervent prayers on the long-suffering people of Romania.

### **Challenging God in Mozambique**

Another persecutor of the Church who challenged God was Samora Machel, the first dictator of Marxist Mozambique. Samora Machel was a cannibal who ate human flesh in witchcraft ceremonies in the 1960s. He pledged his soul to Satan and vowed that he would destroy the Church and turn Mozambique into the first truly Marxist-Leninist state in Africa. Thousands of churches in Mozambique were closed, confiscated, nationalised, claimed and padlocked, burnt down or boarded up. Missionaries were expelled, some being imprisoned first. Evangelism was forbidden. Bibles were ceremonially burnt and tens of thousands of Christians, including many pastors and elders, were shipped off to concentration camps - most were never seen again.

A month before his sudden death Samora Machel cursed God publicly and challenged Him to prove His existence by striking him (Machel) dead. On 19 October 1986, while several churches were specifically praying for God to stop persecution in Mozambique, Machel’s Soviet Tupelov aircraft crashed in a violent thunderstorm. The plane crashed 200 metres within South Africa’s boundary with Mozambique. Amidst the wreckage the Marxist plans for overthrowing the government of Malawi were discovered and published. Not only had God judged a blasphemer and a persecutor, but He had also saved a country from persecution.

### **The Power of Prayer in Zambia**

In the months leading up to the first multi-party elections in Zambia many churches fasted and prayed for God to remove the 27 year socialist dictatorship of Kenneth Kaunda. This was done on 31st October 1991, when Fredrick Chiluba (a man converted to Christ whilst imprisoned for opposing Kaunda) was elected president of Zambia and covenanted to make Zambia a Christian country.

### **The Prayers of John Knox in Scotland**

It is recorded in history that the wicked Mary, Queen of Scots, declared trembling and in tears: I am more afraid of John Knox’s prayers than of an army of ten thousand.

## May we Pray the Imprecatory Psalms?

Martin Luther pointed out that when one prays: ***“Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done”*** then he must put all the opposition to this in one pile and say: Curses, maledictions and disgrace upon every other name and every other kingdom. May they be ruined and torn apart and may all their schemes and wisdom and plans run aground.

## Kingdoms in Conflict

To pray for the extension of God’s Kingdom is to seek the destruction of all other kingdoms, e.g. Daniel 2:44: ***“The God of heaven will set up a Kingdom that will never be destroyed... It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.”*** Advance and victory for the Church means defeat and retreat for the kingdom of darkness.

**There is a life and death struggle between two kingdoms.** The Church cannot exclude hatred for satan’s kingdom from its love for God’s Kingdom. God’s Kingdom cannot come without satan’s kingdom being destroyed. God’s will cannot be done on earth without the destruction of evil. The glory of God demands the destruction of evil. Instead of being influenced by a sickly sentimentalism which insists upon the assumed, but really non-existent, rights of man - we should focus instead upon the rights of God.

## The Blessings of Obedience and the Curses of Disobedience

The imprecatory Psalms are fully consistent with the law of God: ***“If you do not carefully follow all the words of this Law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome Name - the Lord your God - the Lord will send fearful plagues on you and your descendants. He will bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will cling to you. The Lord will also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded in this Book of the Law until you are destroyed ... because you did not obey the Lord your God... so it will please Him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess.”*** Deuteronomy 28:58-63

## How Can We Preach these Prayers?

The Church of Jesus Christ is an army under orders.

Scripture constitutes the official dispatches from the Commander-in-Chief. But we have a problem: those who are called to pass on those orders are refusing to do so. How then can we expect to be a united, effective army? Is it any wonder that the troops have lost sight of their commission to demolish the strongholds of the kingdom of darkness? If the Church does not hear the battle cries of her Captain, how will she follow Him onto the battlefield?

Pastors are commissioned to pass on the orders of the Church's Commander, never withholding or changing His words. One whose job is to carry dispatches to troops in wartime would face certain and severe punishment if he dared to amend the general's orders. The pastor's charge is of greater importance than that of a courier in any earthly army. There is no place for the dispatcher to decide he does not agree with his Commander's strategy.

When Jesus Christ sent seventy-two disciples on a preaching mission, He told them to proclaim the coming of God's Kingdom (Luke 10:9) - that is, to announce that people must submit to God's rule in their lives. Jesus instructed them to pray for peace on any house they approach, assuring them that if anyone rejected it, the peace would return on the disciples. But we must consider what He said they should do if their message were rejected - that is, if the hearers persisted in rebellion against God's rule - ***"But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The Kingdom of God is near'"*** Luke 10:11.

What would be the result of that denunciation? I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom (on which God sent fire from heaven in judgement for its wickedness) than for that town. Immediately Jesus added curses on Korazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum for their rejection of His message.

He then explained to the disciples the great authority He had given them: ***"He who listens to you listens to Me; he who rejects you rejects Me; but he who rejects Me rejects him who sent Me"*** (10:16). This is the fundamental basis for calling down God's curses on anyone: his persistent rebellion against God's authority expressed in His Law and the ministry of His servants.

We need to clearly and forcefully proclaim the war cries of the Prince of Peace. Only then will the Church awake from its lethargy and once again enter the battle. If we fail to pass on the battle cry then a lack of urgency and confusion in the ranks will be inevitable.

## God Cannot Be Mocked

Like Psalm 1 our preaching needs to clearly show the blessings of obedience and the curse of disobedience. The eternal truth is that **God cannot be mocked**. Whatever a man sows - that shall he reap (Galatians 6:7). The curses pronounced on disobedience in Deuteronomy 28:47-53 were fulfilled in detail in Samaria (2 Kings 6:28-29) and in Judea (AD 70). The wrath of God upon covenant breakers is real.

The **I** of the Psalms is Jesus Christ. The **we** of the Psalms includes those of us in the Lord Jesus. The enemies are not our own, individually, but those of the Lord and of His Church. The Psalms are of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. They record Christ's march in victory against the kingdom of darkness. As Christ is the Author of the Psalms, so, too, is He the final fulfilment of the Covenant on which they are based. God will answer the psalmist's prayers completely in Jesus Christ on the final Day of Judgement. While on earth Jesus foretold the day when He will say: ***"But those enemies of Mine who did not want Me to be King over them - bring them here and kill them in front of Me"*** Luke 19:27.

## God's Kingdom is at War

A fatal end awaits everyone who refuses to acknowledge and to obey Jesus as King and Lord. Hearing expositions of these war psalms of the Prince of Peace will remind His people that God's Kingdom is at war! The Kingdom of darkness is being overcome by the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, a war in which each local congregation of believers plays a vital part. You must rally your battalion to put on the whole armour of God, including ***"the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God"*** Ephesians 6:17. That battle-readiness also involves ***"pray(ing) in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests"*** Ephesians 6:18.

## Pray for the Persecuted

To deal with the very real hurts and injustices in this world it is necessary for us to pray for God's justice. Those who are persecuted need the comfort of these prayers.

***“Let the saints rejoice in His honour and sing for joy... May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentences written against them. This is the glory of all His saints. Praise the Lord.”*** Psalm 149:5-9

## **Spiritual Warfare**

Prayer is, in fact, spiritual warfare. One weapon is prayer for conversion of spiritual enemies; another is prayer for judgement on those who finally refuse to be converted. We handicap the army of God when we refuse to use both of these great weapons that He has given us. It is at all times a part of the task of the people of God to destroy evil.

If you have been guilty of dulling your sword, by neglecting or undermining these Psalms, repent of that sin, sharpen your sword anew, and go forth to do battle in the Name and for the Glory of Jesus - until ***“the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the water cover the sea”*** Habakkuk 2:14



## Chapter 9

# The Cross and Conflict

Could peace and prosperity be detrimental to our spiritual health? This may seem to be a shocking suggestion but recent history and personal experience should make us seriously consider the possibility. Wars, natural disasters and suffering seem to be regularly used of the Lord to revive spiritual fervour and bring vast multitudes to their knees in repentance. The sword rather than the olive leaf seems to serve the cause of both personal spiritual growth and evangelism.

### **Not Peace but a Sword**

For those hoping for world-wide peace - our Lord Jesus Christ declared: *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth I did not come to bring peace but a sword.”* Matthew 10:34

### **Transform Your Thinking**

Unfortunately most Christians fail to see the big picture. We seldom consider our personal suffering or world events in the light of eternity. Many may feel like Christians but very few **think** like Christians. Many have Christian hearts but all too few have Christian minds because the average church-goer spends more time reading the newspaper than reading the Bible. If we spend more time watching TV than in worshipping Christ we will become practical humanists.

### **Distracted and Deceived by Disinformation**

Nobody would welcome a stranger coming into his home and re-arranging the furniture. Yet we regularly allow secular humanists in the mass media to re arrange our thoughts and distort our perspectives. The secular media often erodes the faith of believers in the sovereignty of God. Like vultures, many TV cameramen swoop down to focus in on the wars, famines, disasters and tragedies. They very seldom go on to present the wide angle picture of what God is doing even in the midst of these tragedies and in spite of the suffering. Hence most Christians (who depend almost exclusively upon the secular, humanist-controlled media for their perspectives on history and current events) are overwhelmed with a sense of hopelessness amidst meaningless sufferings in a chance world.

## Live in the Light of Eternal Reality

However, the view from heaven in the light of eternity is completely different. There is a cosmic world war in progress between the forces of darkness and the heavenly armies of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eternal destinies are at stake. As C. T. Studd put it ***“Only one life, it will soon be past; Only what’s done for Christ will last. . . Some like to live within sound of church or chapel bell - I’d like to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell”***

## Faith Under Fire

Over the last 33 years as a Missionary, I have found that one can be closer to the Lord surrounded by the forces of hell than back at home amongst the saints in church. I have experienced the richest blessings of God’s presence in the midst of conflict, under fire in war zones, being beaten by mobs, in solitary confinement in prison and in the killing fields. I felt closer to God there than I ever have at church conferences, camps and worship services.

## Priorities Purified

There is something spiritually purifying about suffering. There is nothing quite like the possibility of sudden death to straighten out one’s priorities! Comfort softens us, but hardship strengthens us. Health and wealth often breeds complacency, selfishness and greed. However, suffering can encourage sharing and self sacrifice. ***“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*** 1 Peter I:6-7

## Suffering Helps us Focus on what Really Matters

Certainly, I have found people in war-torn regions far more receptive to the Gospel than those in stable, peaceful areas. Combat soldiers in an operational area are much more open to the Gospel than administrative and support troops in the safe areas. Many more people come to genuine repentance and faith in Christ in hospitals and prisons than in our churches. We always find it far more satisfying to teach the Word of God to spiritually hungry Mozambicans or Angolans than to try to persuade Gospel-hardened connoisseurs of sermons in the affluent West.



## **Times of Spiritual Growth**

In my own spiritual life I can clearly see that my greatest times of spiritual growth have been in the army, in the mission field and in prison. My most earnest times of repentance and heart searching prayer have been when sick, after a motorbike accident, when captured by communist troops and in the Intensive Care Unit with my new-born son when he was in critical renal failure.

## **Complacency is Our Enemy**

Our missionaries also have observed that they cannot compare their devotional fervour in the mission field with that in the comforts of home. Comfort and complacency are the enemies of our devotional lives, while conflict and crisis fuel the fires of spiritual zeal. This is also true in world missions.

## **Bad Times are Good for Spiritual Work**

We are living in a time of great uncertainty and instability. World-wide there are at least 48 wars in progress and many hundreds of millions are afflicted by famines, epidemics and other natural disasters. Yet we are also living at a time of the greatest in gathering of people into the Kingdom of God. Every day there are an average of 80 000 more Bible-believing Protestants added to the church worldwide. Every week 3 500 new Protestant churches are planted. And most of the growth has been in Asia and Africa amidst the most severe suffering.

## **War and World Evangelism**

**Afghanistan** has been one of the least evangelised countries in the world. There are over 48 000 mosques, but not a single church building. This 99% Muslim country has been closed to missionaries. Just before the Soviet invasion in 1979, the last Christian church was demolished. Yet the devastating war brought about the greatest openness to the Gospel ever seen in Afghanistan. Thousands of Afghans have been converted to Christ - many by Russian Christian soldiers! Many refugees also came to faith in Christ.

In **Argentina** the tragic disaster of the Falklands/Malvinas War against Britain in 1982 and the national economic collapse which accompanied it led to a spiritual revival. Literally millions of Argentinians have been converted to Christ and joined evangelical churches since 1982. Evangelicals now comprise over 12% of the population.

**Armenia** was one of the world's first Christian states (AD 301). This landlocked, mountainous Caucasian state has been an island of Christianity in a sea of Islam. Often the victim of its strategic location between Turkey, Iran and Russia, the Armenian people suffered the most severe holocaust in 1915 when the Muslim Turks sought to annihilate the Christian Armenians. Over 1½ million (two-thirds of their total population) were murdered in this genocide. Yet the Faith of the ancient Armenian Apostolic Church has endured and flourished. The 1988 earthquake was followed by a great movement of national repentance, a resurgence of interest in the Scriptures and revival. The evangelical arm of the Apostolic Church, the Brotherhood, has flourished with its emphasis on Biblical preaching, personal witness, works of mercy and distribution of Bibles and evangelical literature. The war in Nagorno Karabagh, in defence of the Christians against Islamic attack, was also accompanied by powerful Revival.

**Ethiopia** can claim to be one of the oldest nations in the world. There are over 60 references to Ethiopia in the Bible. Ethiopia was also one of the first Christian nations - from the fourth century. This ancient mountain kingdom surrounded by deserts has suffered two great waves of violent persecution - under the Italian fascists from 1936 until 1941 (when South African troops liberated them) and under the Marxist regime from 1974 until 1991. These traumatic seasons of suffering have also been great seasons of harvest with many millions coming to Christ. Protestants were fewer than 200 000 (less than 0.8% of the population) in 1960. By 2010 the Evangelicals had grown to over 17 million (and 20% of the population)!

**Indonesia** is the world's fifth most populous nation (230 million people) and it has the largest number of Muslims in any country (approximately 190 million). Yet out of the bloodbath of the failed Communist coup in 1965 sprang one of the greatest movements to Christianity. The harsh extremism of some Muslim groups and the fierce Muslim reprisals upon the communists, their families and sympathisers (over ½ million were killed in the repression following the coup) repelled many people. About ten million were converted to Christianity - most from Muslim or Communist backgrounds!

The Islamic revolution in **Iran** in 1979 brought about much bloodshed and division and shocked many Muslims. The cruelty, corruption, extremism

and hatred of the Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic regime disillusioned many Muslims who began to be open to the Gospel. There were less than 500 known Iranian Christians in 1979. Today there are over 117 000 Bible believing Christians in Iran and many thousands of Iranians who have been converted since fleeing the tyranny there.

Few countries have suffered as much as **Korea** -under Japanese occupation, the Soviet-imposed division of Korea and the devastating Civil War (1950-1953). Yet the Revival in South Korea is extraordinary. The first Protestant Church was planted in 1884. By 2010 there were 50 000 Protestant churches. The capital, Seoul is almost 40% Christian (in a Buddhist country!) with over 7 000 churches. Seoul is home to 10 of the 20 largest congregations in the world. The largest baptism service in the world was in the South Korean army (which is 65% Christian). The largest Christian meetings, evangelistic campaigns and theological seminaries in the world are all in South Korea.

Suffering in **Nicaragua** has brought about a remarkable turning towards God. The earthquakes and volcanic eruptions of 1972, which destroyed the capital, were followed by a great number of conversions to Christ. The Marxist revolution of 1979 devastated the economy and inflicted terrible oppression and injustices. The decade of bitter civil war cost many thousands of precious lives. Yet amidst the violence and despair the number of Evangelical Christians has mushroomed from less than 2% of the population in 1960 to 7% in 1980, to 15% in 1990. Now it is estimated that up to 30% of Nicaraguans are Bible-believing Christians.

**Sudan** is the largest country in Africa. It has the longest war of this century still raging (since 1956). Sudan is the site of the most vicious anti-Christian persecution raging anywhere in the world today. Yet the church in Southern Sudan is experiencing real revival and spectacular growth. Forty years ago nominal Christians made up 2% of the total population. Today Christians comprise over 20% of Sudan and large numbers of Muslims are coming to Christ.

The vast country of **Congo** endured eight years of vicious violence and anarchy in the 1960's. Many thousands of Christians, including hundreds of missionaries were martyred. Yet persecution and pressure purified the Church and brought about a new spiritual earnestness. Churches overflowed and all night prayer meetings became common. There has been a massive turning to Christ from less than 1% Protestant in 1900 to 21% of the population today.

**China** is the largest nation in the world with 21% of the world's population. The communist revolution in 1949 caused immeasurable suffering, and the largest number of victims massacred in history. Especially under the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Christians suffered what was probably the most widespread and harshest persecution ever experienced. Yet the growth of the Church in China has no parallels in history. Rather than eradicating the Church, the fires of persecution in China purified, strengthened and expanded the Church.

The bondage of centuries of Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism have been broken. The deep set resistance to Christianity has dissipated as it is no longer seen as foreign but as an indigenous faith. Waves of revival have followed every man-induced or natural disaster. The 140 years of sacrificial seed sowing by thousands of missionaries and the blood of hundreds of thousands of martyrs has brought about the greatest spiritual harvest in history. There were less than two million Protestants in China before the great persecution began. In 1992 even the hostile State Statistical Bureau estimated that over 63 million Chinese were Protestants. In 2010 Operation World calculated that there were 105 million Christians in China. Most of this phenomenal growth has been in response to the illegal radio and literature evangelism from outside the country and through itinerant preachers and the illegal house church networks.

The Chinese word for *crisis* is made up of two words - danger and opportunity. Certainly in missionary work it is true that crisis situations are the most fertile fields for ministry. Wherever there is danger - such as in wars or persecution -there are unique opportunities for serving God.

## **Making Sense Out of Suffering**

At this point some may object that I am making light of suffering. That is not my intention. I have spent many days ministering with widows and orphans, seeking to alleviate their suffering with relief aid and counselling. Rather, I want us to better appreciate the value of an eternal soul. In the light of eternity any sacrifices made to bring lost sinners to the Saviour will be seen as eminently worthwhile. God does not enjoy seeing people suffer, but He does use suffering for some good purposes (Acts 14:22).

## **Everything Has Consequences**

God made a world in which actions have consequences. Where descendants either inherit the benefits of their ancestors' wisdom and ingenuity or

suffer the poverty, oppressions and wars which come from evil choices by their neighbours or forefathers. Suffering judges sin in general - showing that what the human race sows it will also reap (Deut. 28).

In addition, God does also send disasters on nations and individuals to judge specific persistent sin (Acts 5:1-11; 12:23; 1 Cor 11:30-32). However, we should not assume that an individual or a nation is suffering because of their own sin. Job's suffering was not an indication of God's displeasure but rather the opposite. Often suffering is sent by God to strengthen our faith and to demonstrate that our faith is genuine. People are attracted to Christ when they see Christians handling suffering with grace and confidence in God. Suffering is part of life and we are called to ***"endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"*** 2 Tim 2:3; ***"all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution"*** 2 Tim 3:12; ***"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow His steps"*** 1 Peter 2:21.

## **What Man Means for Evil God Can Use for Good**

God can use our suffering for our spiritual good and for the strengthening and extending of His Kingdom. ***"We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose"*** Romans 8:28.

## **Your Attitude is Critical**

Our attitude amidst suffering must glorify God and draw unbelievers to Christ. ***"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ."*** 2 Corinthians 1:3-5. Suffering should drive us to depend upon God and grow in faith. Therefore the Scripture exhorts us to ***"count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. . . Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him"*** James 1:2-3, 12.

## **The Suffering is Temporary - The Glory is Eternal**

Since we are God's children we will share in His blessings and in His sufferings. For if we share in Christ's sufferings we will also share in His

glory. And our present sufferings cannot be compared with the glory of eternity (Rom 8: 17-18).

### **Sacrifices must be Made**

The Cross is at the heart of the Gospel and it involved incredible suffering and sacrifice for our Lord and Saviour. We cannot divorce the Cross from missions. The very purpose for Christ's Blood Atonement was missionary: *"For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your Blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation. . . Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing!"* Revelation 5:9, 12.

God has joined the Cross and the Great Commission together and what God has joined together let no man separate.

### **The Great Commission Must Be Our Supreme Ambition**

Obviously the Great Commission was important to our Lord Jesus. Yet less than 1% of church finances go to missions and less than a third of one percent of church funds go to foreign missions. Less than 10% of evangelical churches have any missions programme at all. Our Lord's last Command must be our first concern. The Great Commission should be our supreme ambition. We must centre on what is central to God's Word - Missions. Our great God and Saviour deserves all glory and honour and so we should invest all our strength and wisdom to proclaim all of His Word to all the world and to persuade rebellious sinners to fully surrender to the Lordship of Christ.

### **Crisis and Conflict Come with The Cross**

However, having said that, we need to recognise that God's army often advances on its knees in prayer and on its back in pain. The Cross required suffering. Fulfilling the Great Commission will require no less.



# Chapter 10

## The Challenge of Missions

**Never have there been so many incredible opportunities for missionary work worldwide, yet there are tens of thousands of vacancies waiting to be filled on the mission field today. The harvest has never been so large – and the workers are frustratingly few.**

Finding suitable missionary volunteers has never been easy – nor is it likely to get any easier. Missionary service demands **dedication, determination** and **discipline** – and these qualities are basically rejected by the television generation.

### **Crippling Attrition Rate**

Every mission leader I know has had to grapple with an almost crippling shortage of staff and a serious shortage of long-term commitment. The increasing attrition rate of first term mission volunteers giving up is destabilising missionary endeavours worldwide.

### **Existential Short Sighted Disposable Culture**

Most churchgoers today are secular in their mindset and lifestyle. They have few convictions, more questions than answers. They are reluctant to make long-term commitments. Our society is existential (concerned primarily about my own personal experience, now!) This throwaway, disposable culture is short-sighted, cynical and short of faith and vision for the future. Our present generation has become selfish, sloppy, soft, spoiled and self-indulgent, unaccustomed to personal sacrifice, unwilling to endure hardship, and unlikely to exhibit loyalty to any mission, devotion to duty or courage in the face of danger.

### **Unwilling to be Inconvenienced**

Bill Bathman – a missionary who has devoted over 60 years to missions, mainly serving the persecuted churches in Eastern Europe – put it this way: *“It’s not that Christians in the West aren’t willing to suffer persecution for Christ - they just do not want to be inconvenienced!”*

### **Technological Advantages**

In this computer age our technological advantages over previous

generations of missionaries is astounding. Instead of weeks of travel by boat and months by ox-cart and on foot, today we can literally reach almost any location in the world within a few days by aircraft, trains and 4-wheel drive vehicles. The advent of radio, computers, desk-top publishing, photocopiers and fax machines have made communications, Bible translations and literature production incredibly accessible to all.

## Extended Missionary Life Expectancies

Also medical advances now mean that missionaries to West and Central Africa are not being sent to almost certain death. Malaria once made Africa the missionaries' graveyard – whole families perished planting the Gospel in this continent. The average life expectancy of a missionary to Africa was 8 years and to West Africa 2 years. Some died within 3 months of arriving.

## Single Minded Determination

CMS Missionary to Uganda, Alexander Macay, expressed the single-minded determination common to 19th century volunteers:

*“I want to remind the committee that within six months they will probably hear that one of us is dead. But... when that news comes, do not be cast down, but send someone else immediately to take the vacant place.”* Within three months one was dead. Within a year two more had perished. Within two years Mackay was the only one of their missionaries left alive in Uganda. He actually survived 12 years.

Rowland Bingham, a missionary to Nigeria vowed: *“I will open Africa to the Gospel or die trying.”*

## Integrity and Perseverance

Yet such devotion to duty is extremely rare today. With all our technological advantages we still lag far behind the 19th century missionaries in terms of actual effectiveness. It's not that we lack the tools – but the tenacity. Inventions are a poor substitute for **integrity, initiative** and **innovation**. Computers cannot make up for a loss of **character**. We have lots of programmes, but it is **persistence** and **perseverance**, which fulfil the Great Commission.

## Challenges from the Past

Listen to these voices from the past, from missionaries who backed up their words with their lives:



- **Nate Saint**, a missionary pilot who was killed by the Auca Indians to whom he was ministering in Ecuador wrote: *“The way I see it, we ought to be willing to die. In the military, we were taught that to **obtain our objectives we had to be willing to be expendable**. Missionaries must face that same expendability.”*
- **C T Studd**, the famous cricketer turned pioneer missionary to China, India and the Congo, declared: *“If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.”*
- Another missionary put it this way: *“Our God bids us first build a cemetery before we build a church or dwelling house, showing us that the resurrection of Africa must be effected by our own destruction.”*
- **Johan Krapf**, missionary to East Africa, lost his wife and two children within months of arriving in Africa. He wrote: *“Though many missionaries may fall in the fight, yet the survivors will pass over the slain into the trenches and take this great African fortress for the Lord.”*
- **Sadhu Sundar Singh**, missionary to Tibet, declared: *“I must obey my Master and preach His Gospel, regardless of the threats or suffering.”*
- **Henry Martyn**, missionary to India and Persia, wrote: *“To all appearance the present year will be more perilous than any I have seen, but if I live to complete the Persian New Testament, my life after that will be of less importance.”*
- **Elizabeth Freeman**, missionary to India, declared: *“I hope you will be a missionary wherever your lot is cast... it makes but little difference after all where we spend these few fleeting years, if they are only spent for the glory of God. Be assured there is nothing else worth living for.”*
- **Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf**, the founder of the Moravian missionary movement, declared: *“I have one passion – it is He, it is He alone. The world is the field, and the field is the world and henceforth **that country shall be my home where I can be most used in winning souls for Christ.**”*

## **Action is Eloquence**

These are the inspiring words of Christians whom God used in wonderful ways. Their positive impact upon their world was incalculable. They

literally affected the course of history. Not because of what they said, but because they put feet to their faith. As William Shakespeare said: “*action is eloquence.*” Our actions are, in fact, the best interpreters of our thoughts and priorities.

Where can we find such Christian volunteers today? Or more to the point – **how can we produce such self-sacrificing disciples in our churches?**

If the church at the end of the Twentieth Century truly wants to obey the Great Commission, then we must produce tens of thousands of such disciples. To effectively evangelise the entire Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist populations in the final missionary frontier – the 10-40 window – we will need an army of dedicated disciples. They will need to be like the missionary volunteers who made the 19th Century the greatest time of missionary advance and revival in history. The prayer support base that sends them out will need to be just as dedicated.

### **What kind of disciples does the mission field demand?**

An effective missionary needs to be a person who **diligently studies the Bible** to discover God’s Will and who is **determined to obey it**. Obedience is the best commentary on the Bible and as Martin Luther stated: “*I had rather obey than work miracles!*”

From this foundation of **prayerful study** of God’s Word needs to develop true Christian character. This cannot be hastily done. Steadfast **Christian character** is the product of years of prayer and Bible study and the cultivated habit of responding to God’s Word in repentance, faith and obedience.

It involves a **teachable heart** and a **willingness to accept rebuke and discipline**. This is absolutely essential in missionary service because of the difficult tasks required, in the often-harsh climates and inhospitable terrains, with the inevitable cross-cultural confusions and misunderstandings – mistakes and failures are inevitable. Resolving inter-personal disputes, overcoming obstacles and enduring criticisms are all part of our job description.

The measure of a person’s real character is how he works when no one is watching. Referring to temptation, C H Spurgeon advised: “*Learn to say: ‘No’ It will be of more use to you than to be able to read Latin.*”

## **Choices Habits Character and Destiny**

If you choose an act, you create a habit, if you create a habit, you shape a character. If you shape a character, you determine a destiny. As D L Moody said: *“If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself.”*

One of the marks of Christian character is **integrity** – the unshakeable commitment to be true to one’s word. This is important because missions are built upon relationships of trust. We have a sacred trust to honour – with God, the churches and supporters who send us out and those to whom we are sent. There must never be any doubt that you as a Christian missionary will be true to your word, keep your promises and fulfil all your obligations.

Another vital aspect to be cultivated is one’s **attitude**. Charles Swindoll has stated it most eloquently: *“Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% of how we respond to it... This may shock you, but I believe the single most significant decision I can make on a day-to-day basis is my choice of attitude. It is more important than my past, my education, my bankroll, my successes or failure, fame or pain, what other people think of me or say about me, my circumstances, or my position. Attitude is that ‘single string’ that keeps me going or cripples my progress. It alone fuels my fire or assaults my hope. When my attitudes are right, there is no barrier too high, no valley too deep, no dream too extreme, no challenge too great for me.”*

There is no doubt in my mind that a missionary volunteer’s **attitude** is far more important than his **abilities** – or apparent lack of them. We all have preconceived notions of just what type of person will succeed in missions – yet time and again God surprises us and challenges us by using some of the most unlikely candidates in the most unexpected ways. The only common denominator is – **a willing volunteer with a positive attitude!** I have seen many talented, gifted, promising people – with impressive resumes – fail and give up. I know of many others – with far less apparent abilities – persevere and overcome disappointments, delays, discomfort, defeats and difficulties to succeed!

There is a major difference in people; the big difference is whether their attitude is **positive** or **negative!** As Leo Tolstoy wrote: *“We lost because we told ourselves we lost.”* Peter Daniels often challenges his audiences: *“If you think you can or you can not – you are right!”*

## **Pessimists Have a Problem for Every Solution**

Pessimists will not make the most effective missionaries – certainly they wouldn't be very happy in the uncertain and difficult situations, which so often prevail in the field. Pessimists have a problem for every solution. A pessimist is one who, when he has the choice of two evils, chooses both.

## **Mindsets Determine Destiny**

How we steadily and habitually think – that is what we tend to become. Negative people feel trapped by the past and helplessly look backwards at what might have been. Positive people feel inspired by the future and confidently look forward to what can be accomplished.

## **Secrets for Success**

There are always many reasons why a certain task **cannot** be done. Those who succeed are those who are willing to learn, to work hard, to adapt, innovate and persevere to overcome all obstacles to complete their mission. This requires an inspiring vision of what God wants done and an optimistic attitude towards how God could use even me – in spite of myself – to accomplish His Will (2 Corinthians 3:5). The Bible reading Christian must eventually become an optimist: *“I can do everything through Him Who gives me strength.”* Phil. 4:13

## **Job Description Includes Enduring Criticism**

An essential aspect of a missionary's job description is a **willingness to endure opposition and criticism**. In fact, it would be very helpful if missionaries were sensitive enough to hear the still small voice of God's guidance whilst learning to adapt to foreign cultures, and thick-skinned enough to be unaffected by either flattery or unjustified criticism (the latter is far more common)!

## **A Sense of Humour is Essential**

A willingness to submit to authority and an openness to receive rebuke and criticism is essential. However, one also needs to discern between constructive and destructive criticism. As C.T. Studd said: *“Had I cared for the comments of people, I should never have been a missionary.”* Of his time in China, Studd wrote: *“For five years we never went outside our doors without a volley of curses from our neighbours.”* To cope with such hostility, a **sense of humour** is essential - as is seen in these examples.

**John Paton**, missionary to New Hebrides (where the first attempt to introduce Christianity resulted in missionaries John Williams and James Harris being clubbed to death within minutes of landing in 1839), related the following: *“Amongst many who sought to deter me, was one dear old Christian gentleman, whose crowning argument always was, ‘The Cannibals! You will be eaten by Cannibals!’ At last I replied, ‘Mr. Dickson, you are advanced in years now, and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms; I confess to you, that if I can but live and die serving and honouring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms.’”*

**Robert Morrison**, the first Protestant missionary to China, was confronted by a man who contemptuously chided him: *“Now, Mr. Morrison, do you really expect that you will make an impression on the idolatry of the Chinese empire?”* ‘No sir,’ responded Morrison, *‘but I expect that God will!’”*

**C.T. Studd**, missionary to the Congo, presented this parable: *“Remember the miller’s donkey ... the miller, his son and donkey went to the market. The miller rode the donkey all the way and people exclaimed, ‘Cruel man, riding himself and making his son walk.’ So he got down and his son rode; then people slanged, ‘What a lazy son for riding while his poor old father walks.’ Then both father and son rode, and people then said, ‘Cruelty to animals, poor donkey.’ So they got down and carried the donkey on a pole, but folks said, ‘Here are two asses carrying another ass.’ Then all three walked and people said, ‘What fools to have a donkey and not ride it.’ So let’s go ahead with our work for God and not care what folks say.”*

## **What are You Investing Your Time and Talents Into**

Of course, those who endeavour to submit to Bible College or theological training and apply to join a mission will be told by well-meaning relatives and friends that they are wasting their lives. Nate Saint’s response to this should be our own: *“And people who do not know the Lord ask why in the world we waste our lives as missionaries. They forget that **they too are expending their lives...** and when the bubble has burst they will have nothing of **eternal significance** to show for the years they have wasted.”*

## **Live in the Light of Eternity**

**David Brainerd**, the 18th century missionary to North American Indians, declared: *“As long as I see anything to be done for God, life is worth living; but O, how vain and unworthy it is to live for any lower end!”*

## Available and Teachable

Many reading these testimonies may feel inadequate to follow in the footsteps of such pioneers. It is worth remembering that none of them felt either worthy or capable in and of themselves. However, they were willing to learn and they trusted in God's power, not their own.

**Gladys Aylward**, missionary to China, expressed her view in this way:

*"I wasn't God's first choice for what I've done for China... I do not know who it was... It must have been a man... a well-educated man. I do not know what happened. Perhaps he wasn't willing... And God looked down... and saw Gladys Aylward... And God said - 'Well, she is willing!'"*

**Isobel Kuhn**, missionary to China, issued the following challenge:

*"I believe that (in) each generation God has 'called' enough men and women to evangelise all the yet unreached tribes of the earth... everywhere I go, I constantly meet with men and women who say to me, 'When I was young I wanted to be a missionary, but I got married instead.' Or, 'My parents dissuaded me,' or some such thing. No, it is not God who does not call. It is man who will not respond."*

## Where are the Men?

Which raised the point: Over 80% of all missionaries today are women. Where are all the men? What kind of army sends its women into the frontline of battle? Financial considerations, family responsibilities and career demands no doubt play a major role in pre-occupying men, and their personal involvement in fulfilling the Great Commission seems to be "*Mission Impossible*"!

## Where are the Mission Minded Churches?

However, this need not be so. If our congregations would truly make missions a priority then the financial constraints that hold back so many eager volunteers would be swept away. Less than 10% of Evangelical churches have any missions programme at all. Less than 1% of total church income is spent on foreign missions! If churches would set aside at least 10% of their budget to support missionaries, and especially those sent out from their own congregation, then literally thousands more volunteers could be mobilised.

It is a sad commentary on the average congregation that more is spent on carpets, heaters and parking lots than they allocate for fulfilling the Great Commission.

## **What Openings are There?**

There are so very many ways to serve the Lord in Missions today: Bible translations, radio broadcasts, medical work, church planting, literature evangelism, education, administration and so on.

We need teachers and technicians, preachers and printers, computer programmers and church planters, artists and artisans, Bible teachers and bricklayers, and many more.

You will not need to worry about “*an opening*” - there are thousands of kilometres of opening and you can take your choice as to where you will establish yourself.

But you may ask: *What constitutes a call?*

### **THE NEED:**

*“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few.”* Matthew 9:37

### **THE COMMAND:**

*“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”*

Mark 16:15

### **THE LOVE OF CHRIST:**

*“The love of Christ constrains us, because... One died for all...”*

2 Corinthians 5:14

### **THE WILL OF GOD:**

*“The Lord... is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* 2 Peter 3:9

### **THE GREAT COMMISSION:**

*“All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded...”* Matthew 28:18-20

## **Who Will Go?**

All Christians must pray, most can give, and some can go. We must all serve God somewhere. Whether we are called to go across the street or across the world, our mission is the same - to make disciples... teaching obedience. ***“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said: ‘Here am I! Send me.’”*** Isaiah 6:8

One who answered the call was David Brainerd whose journal included this prayer: *“Here I am, send me; send me to the rough, the savage pagans of the wilderness, send me from all that is called comfort on earth; send me even to death itself, if it be but in Thy service and to promote Thy Kingdom.”*

As C.T. Studd declared: ***“Only one life, it will soon be past.  
Only what’s done for Christ will last.”***





# Chapter 11

## The Persecution of Christians in Africa

Africa presents many of the greatest challenges and opportunities for missionary service in the world today. The most intensive human suffering, the largest number of wars, the worst famines and the most severe persecutions are all concentrated in Africa. Yet Africa also demonstrates the greatest spiritual hunger and the greatest openness to the Gospel of Christ. I believe Africa also has the most promising potential for Biblical Reformation and revival.

No other continent has suffered such a series of natural and man made disasters over the last 40 years. Famines, droughts, locusts, pestilences, animism, Islam, communism, corruption, maladministration and civil wars have plagued Africa.

Africa has experienced over 130 violent changes of leadership since 1952.

Every year (except 1988) since 1963 has seen at least one violent overthrow of a government in Africa. At present there are 13 wars raging in Africa.

Africa is a continent in conflict. The forces of Islam, communism and witchcraft are engaged in a life and death struggle against the Church of Christ. At stake is the soul of a continent.

### **Communist Persecution**

Throughout the 1970's and 1980's communist regimes in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Angola waged merciless campaigns of persecution against the Christians in their countries (and they sponsored marxist terrorists to export their communist terror to neighbouring countries). Literally thousands of churches were confiscated or destroyed in each of these three Marxist states. And hundreds of thousands of Christians died because of the persecution in Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia.

I personally saw over one hundred burned out churches and walked amidst the ashes of dozens of burned down villages in Mozambique and Angola.

But the communist attempts to eradicate the Christian Faith in Africa have been an abject failure.

The “*Red Terror*” in **Ethiopia** was dramatically curtailed in 1991 with the overthrow of Marxist dictator Mengistu. The huge statue of Lenin in the capital Addis Ababa was toppled and the thousands of Russian, East German and Cuban troops and advisors fled in disgrace. As Mengistu fled into exile under the protection of fellow Marxist Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, the churches in Ethiopia surveyed the devastating results of 18 years of Marxist persecution. Hundreds of thousands had been martyred. Yet the Protestants in Ethiopia multiplied from 241 000 in 1960 to over 17 million today!

### **Animist Persecution**

On 6 April 1994 one of the most dreadful campaigns of mass murder was unleashed upon the Tutsi Christians in **Rwanda**. In just 100 days more people had been slaughtered with machetes and clubs than had died from atomic weapons in all of history. Over 500 000 people, mostly Christians, were murdered in the Rwandan holocaust. And more Rwandese were killed in churches than anywhere else.

I walked inside the bloodied, bullet and shrapnel scarred churches, knee deep in corpses. Splattered with blood, blackened by fire, shattered by blasts of hand grenades - virtually every room in every church testified to the hatred of the witchcraft dominated Hutu tribe for their Tutsi neighbours. Hundreds of human skulls were piled high outside one church where over 1 200 believers had been decapitated by mobs of animists.

Yet the diabolical attempt to wipe out the Christian Church in Rwanda failed. In one of history’s most dramatic reversals of fortune the victims became the victors. The little David defeated Goliath. Today the Christians in Rwanda enjoy religious freedom and the animist perpetrators of the genocide are either in prison (awaiting trial or execution) or in exile in foreign lands.

### **Islamic Persecution**

**The greatest threat to the Church today is presented by Islam.** The largest block of unreached people (over 1 billion people) are Muslims. In Africa, over 40% of the total population are Muslims (over 360 million people).

Through the ages Islam has been the largest and most vicious opponent and persecutor of Christians. By the tenth century the Muslim armies had annihilated half of all the Christians in the world of that time. Today the Islamic Jihad against Christians continues and the sharpest confrontations between Christianity and Islam in the world are in Africa.

Islam claims the whole of North Africa (what were once the lands of great Christian leaders and famous writers such as Tertullian, Origen, Ignatius, Cyprian and Augustine). Muslims are the majority in 17 countries in Africa. In every one of those Islamic states Christians are restricted and persecuted to differing degrees.

In **Morocco** it is against the law to “*proselytize*” (evangelise) or to “*shake the faith*” of a Muslim. The Islamic government refuses to recognise any church that has Moroccan nationals as members. Christians have even been imprisoned for years merely for handing out Gospel literature.

In **Algeria** Islamicist groups such as the *National Salvation Front* and the *Armed Islamic Group* have been waging a brutal war of terror to enforce an Islamic state upon the nominally secular (formerly Marxist) *National Liberation Front* dictatorship. The NLF government’s moves to declare Algeria an Islamic state is unlikely to satisfy the aspirations of the Islamic extremists. Most of the tens of thousands of victims of this Islamic campaign of terror have been Muslims. But many of the victims are Christians who have been bombed, shot or hacked to death. Many Algerian women have had acid thrown in their faces by Islamicists determined to force all women to wear a veil!

Christians accused of “*apostasy*” or “*proselytizing*” in **Egypt** face imprisonment and torture from the authorities. As well as kidnapping, forced conversions to Islam, rape and murder from Islamic militants.

In **Nigeria**, where Muslims are a large minority, Muslims have burned down hundreds of churches and killed thousands of Christians in recent years. Christians in the area claim that they are facing a systematic campaign to “*wipe out any traces of Christianity in the northern states*” of Nigeria.

In **Mauritania** not only is slavery practised, but the death penalty for apostasy (converting from Islam) is part of the penal code and is enforced by the state.

In **Somalia** in 1993 (just before the US military went in under the UN) the last remaining church in the country was destroyed. And the last surviving minister was murdered by Muslim mobs.

The most relentlessly violent persecution of the church today is in **Sudan**. The largest country in Africa is still in the grip of the longest war of this century. Since 1955 the Muslim Arab North has been attacking the Black South. Sudan has the oldest community of Christians in Africa. The Church in Sudan dates back to the first century -to Acts chapter 8 in fact. The treasurer of Queen Candace (who was converted and baptised by Philip) resided in Meroe which is on the Nile in Northern Sudan. By the 6th century, Christianity was the official religion of Nubia. For about 1000 years the majority of the population of Northern Sudan were (at least nominally) Christian. For 900 years these Christians successfully resisted the southward expansion of Islam. But, by the 16th Century, mainly due to internal weaknesses and dissension, the Christian kingdoms of Northern Sudan fell.

## **An Island of Christianity in a Sea of Islam**

Some of the descendants of these early Christians still live in the Nuba Mountains of central Sudan. Today these tenacious believers are on the very frontline of the battle for the Faith. They are an island of Christianity in a sea of Islam. And the *National Islamic Front* (NIF) government of Sudan has declared *Jihad* against the Nuba people. This Jihad primarily takes the form of “*tamsit*” or “*combing*” (scorched earth and forced removals). Most of the churches and villages in the Nuba have been destroyed. Most of the crops have been burned. Most of the livestock have been stolen or destroyed. Hundreds of Christians have been crucified. Tens of thousands have been enslaved. Hundreds of thousands have been murdered.

Over one million Nubans have been forced into concentration camps. In these barbed wire enclosed so-called “*peace camps*”, the Nuban people are subjected to forced Arabisation and Islamisation. Those who refuse to convert to Islam are denied medical care, food and even access to water. Those who attempt to escape are shot.

One Nuba man had his knee cap shattered by a bullet from the government forces as they destroyed his village. The Arabs dragged this man to their nearby “*peace camp*” and demanded that he curse Christ before he would receive any medical care. He refused. They threatened him that he would

not even receive water unless he recited the Islamic creed. Although in agony he still refused. They smashed his other knee cap with a rifle butt. Still he refused to either curse Christ or to embrace Islam. They left him writhing in agony in the blazing sun.

That night he escaped. Although crippled and in intense pain, the Nuba man pulled himself under the barbed wire and dragged his injured legs across the rocky, thorn- ridden ground. All night he crawled. By day he hid in the shade of some bushes and rested. The next night he crawled further. Until he reached the SPLA (Sudanese People's Liberation Army) lines. Today he has a crutch, a wooden leg and an AK47 and he is fighting for freedom in the Nuba Mountains.

Our Frontline Fellowship missionaries to the Nuba have seen the scorched earth tactics of the NIF government. They have watched from mountain tops as the government forces stole herds of livestock and burned down villages and we have walked past the burned out villages and ministered to the survivors of massacres. Our missionaries have also come under rocket and machine cannon attack by government Hind helicopter gunships. Within minutes of landing far behind enemy lines, with about 1 000 Arabic Bibles for the beleaguered Nuban Christians, our mission team was repeatedly strafed and bombed. They saw civilians shredded by the machine cannon fire.

In the face of this cruel campaign of *Jihad* relentlessly forced upon them, the Christians in Sudan have shown remarkable resilience. Despite ongoing terror bombing of churches, the church services are overflowing.

### **Out of the Ashes**

For example: The Episcopal Church in Kotobi invited me to speak at their church conference in March 1996. They had been repeatedly bombed, so the conference was held in the forest a few miles out of town. The nearest enemy garrison was just 16 miles away. After the conference, I held a Discipleship Training Course for pastoral candidates in their church. On 23 August 1996 this church building was attacked by helicopter gunships, rocketed and burned to the ground. Another church in the village was also destroyed in this attack. Five civilians died in the hail of bullet and rocket fire from these gunships.

The church continued to meet in the forest a few miles out of town and to

rebuild their church. On 23 November 1997 I had the privilege of presenting the sermon at the first service in the newly restored Episcopal Church in Kotobi. It was built on the very same spot as the previous building (which had been destroyed) had stood. Over 500 people packed out the rebuilt church building for a joyous three and a half hour celebration that **Jesus Christ is building His Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!**

Another example: In 1920 pioneer missionaries, Dr. Kenneth and Eileen Fraser, of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) came from Scotland and brought the Gospel to Moruland. The Frasers based their mission station at Lui. Twice this work has been destroyed. In 1965 the Muslim government forces swept into the mission station shooting and killing Christians. They burned down the hospital, schools and church building. Yet later all these buildings were rebuilt by the local Christians and the three-fold ministry of Dr. Fraser was restored.

Then again in the 1990's the Arab army swept over Lui and occupied the mission station putting an end to all medical, educational and spiritual work for the second time. When I first saw Lui in May 1997 it had just been liberated from the Muslim government forces by the SPLA resistance movement.

The signs of the Arab occupation were everywhere - trenches, gun emplacements, pill boxes, mine fields, the debris of war, a newly painted mosque and many vandalised graves. There were a shocking number of broken crosses in the grave yard by the Lui church. (However, I noticed that none of the Arabic signs on the graves of Muslim troops who had been buried in Lui had been disturbed at all.)

Rev. Jeffrey pointed out the huge tree *Laro* under which Dr. Fraser had first begun Bible studies and church services. "*Dr. Fraser chose that tree to start the first Moru church because it was the same tree under which the Arab slave traders had bought and sold our people as slaves.*" I looked at the tree with renewed appreciation of God's work of creation which made such a magnificent tree and God's work of redemption (re-creation) which has rescued me from the slavery of sin and death.

I preached the Word to the SPLA soldiers at Lui, and prayed with them that the great work begun at that town would continue, that once again

the hospital, schools, colleges and church would be fully operating to the Glory of God and for the strengthening of His people in Moruland.

It was true, I said, that the Muslim government bombing and occupation had forced the people to flee and had damaged many of the buildings - but ***Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life***. Christianity is the religion of the empty tomb. Out of death comes life - abundant life.

Little did I realise how soon that would be dramatically manifested in Lui. In September the hospital was re-opened. Shortly thereafter the school and then the church were repaired. On 15 November 1997, I presented the sermon at a special memorial service at Lui, the birthplace of Christianity in Moruland. I paid tribute to pioneer missionary Kenneth Fraser who had laid such solid foundations for the Moru church. Dr. Fraser was a medical doctor, a teacher, a pastor and also a decorated soldier who had risen to Major General. Fraser implemented what has proven to be one of the most successful missionary campaigns ever. His strategy was to fulfill the Great Commission by ministering to body, mind and spirit. He started by opening up a hospital, then a school, then a church. Soon he had established nurses training courses, teacher training programmes and pastoral training. He also translated the Gospels and Acts into Moru.

Over 1 500 people packed the Fraser Memorial Church in Lui for this service. Despite repeated destruction, the threefold ministry started by Dr. Fraser has once again been restored. The Lui Hospital is fully operational again -almost 16000 patients had been treated and 400 major operations done just in the first four months after reopening. The resilience of the Church founded by Dr. Fraser has defied all attempts to destroy it. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life!

## **Rolling Back the Islamic Offensive**

The Islamic offensive against Christianity in Sudan cannot succeed. The number of Christians in Sudan has increased from 2% in 1955 to 20% today. And in the South, Christians now form a majority. One denomination grew from two congregations to 150 congregations in just 10 years. A pastor in Sudan can have multiple congregations to care for. I have come across pastors who had up to 60 congregations to oversee. One pastor reported baptising over 9 000 people in a 14 month period!

Muslims are coming to Christ in Sudan in unprecedented numbers.

One commander, Thomas Cirillo, defected with his whole battalion of government troops to the SPLA. I have heard defectors tell me personally: “*We want to become Christians. We want to fight for the South!*”

The reasons for this massive turning to Christ in Sudan are three-fold: Firstly, the extreme harshness and cruelty of the NIF regime is repelling Muslims. Secondly, the resilience and courage of the Christians is attracting Muslims. Thirdly, in Sudan converts from Islam have a place where they can flee to - where they can enjoy religious freedom.

As the SPLA resistance movement wins more territory, we can expect even more Muslims to take advantage of the protection this can offer them to come to Christ without the fear of being executed by the Muslim government of Sudan.

The desperate needs and challenging opportunities for ministry in Sudan are overwhelming. God is clearly doing an incredible work of grace in Sudan and it is our privilege to present ourselves as willing instruments to do whatever needs to be done to serve His suffering Church.

You may ask: “*What can I do?*”

**1. Be informed.** “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*” Hosea 4:6. Obtain our new expanded and updated book ***Faith Under Fire in Sudan***, and other reports in ***Frontline Fellowship News*** on Sudan. Pass on copies of this information to editors, pastors and congressmen.

**2. Be interceding** “*Remember the prisoners as if chained with them. . .*” Hebrews 13:3. Pray for the persecuted. Encourage your pastor to pray for the persecuted from the pulpit.

**3. Be involved.** “*In as much as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me*” Matthew 25:40. Speak up for the persecuted.

Write letters to the editor of your local magazine or newspaper. Write to your elected representative urging pressure on the persecutors and assistance to the persecuted. Organise the donation of Bibles, medicines or other essentials. Since 1995 Frontline Fellowship has completed over 70 missions into Sudan, delivering over 500 000 Bibles and Christian books in 26 languages, and we conducted over 2000 church services and leadership training lectures inside Sudan.



The Christian Church in South Sudan is on the very frontline of the fight for faith and freedom. We can strengthen the Christians in Sudan to not only survive the severe persecution, but to win their persecutors to Christ.

You can also have a part in helping to make history in the Middle East. We can roll back the southward expansion of Islam and reclaim Sudan for Christ.

***“He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust ... Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.”***

Psalm 72: 8-11



## Chapter 12

# Does Your Calendar Reflect Your Faith?

### “Holy Days”

The very name holiday means “*holy day*”. All holidays have religious significance. The events that a society choose to centre its holidays around speak volumes about the religious worldview and value systems of that society.

Ascension Day used to be a holiday in South Africa. Yet, few of us ever appreciated its significance until the government abolished it as a public holiday.

By abandoning the Ascension of Christ, and replacing it with Freedom Day, Workers Day, Human Rights Day, Youth Day and Women’s Day, our government shows that it has rejected Christianity and embraced Humanism. This is far more serious than we may at first suspect. Along with these new secular *holy days* came the abolition of prayer in parliament and the legalisation of homosexuality, gambling, pornography, prostitution and abortion.

### History is HIS Story

The Christian view of history is linear. Unlike the pagan and Eastern religions which hold to re-incarnation and have a circular view of history, or the atheists who believe that “*you came from nothing, you are going nowhere, life is meaningless,*” we Christians believe that History is His story.

### A Christian Calendar

God is sovereign over time and space. At one point in history, God created the world. At another time He judged the world in the flood. At the appointed time, Christ came and died for our sins. Three days later He rose from the dead. Forty days later He ascended into Heaven. Ten days after that He sent the Holy Spirit upon His disciples at Pentecost. One great day He will return to this earth and judge the nations.

History has a goal. Time has meaning. Our calendars should reflect that.

## **The Incarnation**

It is appropriate that the biggest and most important holiday event of our calendar year commemorates the Incarnation of Christ - when God took on human form and was born in Bethlehem. **Christmas** celebrates the greatest gift of all - the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the reason for the season. We need to put Christ back into Xmas. Wise men still seek Him. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”* John 3:16. We give gifts on Christmas Day to celebrate the official birthday of the King of kings, and out of gratitude for the great gifts He has given us.

## **The Atonement**

The second most important holiday is **Good Friday** - when we solemnly remember the Atonement of Christ Jesus, His sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary. He died for our sins. He endured the punishment we deserved - so that we could enjoy the reward that only He deserves. We should be sombre, quiet and thoughtful on Good Friday as we meditate upon the love of God, His holiness, His hatred of sin, His justice and His atonement on the Cross of Calvary. This should inspire us afresh to repentance, thanksgiving and consecration. *“In view of God’s mercy... offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God...”* Romans 12:1

## **The Resurrection**

The third great Christian holiday event is **Resurrection Sunday**. Resurrection Sunday is a joyous celebration of the victory of Christ over death, hell and the grave. Jesus is risen from the dead. He is alive forever more. Death is defeated. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. Christ Jesus was *“...declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead”* Romans 1:4. All the founders of religions are dead. You can visit the graves of Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius and Lenin. But in Jerusalem there is an empty Tomb. *“He is not here; He has risen!”* Luke 24:6 *“...raised to life for our justification.”* Romans 4:25

## **The Ascension**

The fourth most important event in the Christian calendar is **Ascension Day**. Forty days after Resurrection Sunday we celebrate the Ascension of Christ. He is exalted and enthroned at the right hand of God the Father, Almighty. He is above every other name and authority. Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We have an Advocate in Heaven. He hears

our prayers. He will crush all His enemies. He will come again. Therefore, we must go and make disciples of all nations.

## **The Ascension is About Authority**

It is very significant that our government saw fit to abolish the long established Ascension Day as a public holiday, because Ascension Day deals with authority. Christ *“has gone into Heaven and is at God’s right hand - with angels, authorities and powers in submission to Him”* 1 Peter 3:22.

***“All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...”*** Matthew 28:18-20.

## **The Lordship of Christ**

The Ascension proclaims the Lordship of Christ in all areas of life. Jesus has all authority. Jesus is Lord over the world of business, sports, entertainment, and government. Jesus Christ is Lord over the schools, the shops, the cinemas, the factories, the hospitals, the law courts and parliament. There is no area of life that is outside of the authority of Christ. Every doctor, teacher, policeman, parliamentarian, businessman, factory worker, mother, father, magistrate and Supreme Court justice will have to individually stand before Almighty God on the Day of Judgement and give an account of our lives. ***“When You ascended on high, You led captives in Your train...”*** Psalm 68:18

## **The Vindication of Christ**

The Ascension celebrates the vindication of Christ. No doubt, Caiaphas, the high priest, king Herod and the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, thought that they were very important and powerful people. Yet these religious and political leaders are only remembered today because they arrogantly dismissed Christ Jesus. They did not recognise that they were condemning to death the Creator, the Giver of life, the eternal Judge before whom each one of us must stand. The emperor Augustus who issued the decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world, requiring everyone to return to their town of birth, could not have realised at the time that the baby born to third class subjects in far away Judea would one day judge him. ***“The Lord says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’”*** Psalm 110:1

## The Victory of Christ

The Ascension proclaims the ultimate victory of Christ. Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Those that refuse to bow to Christ as Saviour and Lord, today, in the day of grace when forgiveness is freely available, will one day be forced to bow to Christ as the eternal Judge - when they will be condemned to Hell forever. ***“He will crush kings on the Day of His wrath. He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.”*** Psalm 110:5-6.

## The Advocacy of Christ

The Ascension is a great comfort to believers who suffer persecution. *“Therefore, since we have a great High Priest Who has gone through the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the Faith we profess.”* Hebrews 4:14. We have an Advocate in Heaven. He hears our prayers. He ever lives to make intercession for us. He will come again. He will crush all His enemies. Therefore we should not fear governments, popes or councils. We should not bow before idols, nor should we compromise the essential principles of our Faith.

## All Powerful

Though Christ is physically absent from the earth, yet, through His Holy Spirit, He is spiritually present. He is all knowing, everywhere present and all powerful. *“For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.”* 1 Corinthians 15:25. The Ascension is a wonderful reminder and assurance to us that *“... the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”* Habakkuk 2:14 ***“Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the Name that is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow in Heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”*** Philippians 2:9-11.

## The Return of Christ

The Ascension proclaims Christ's glorious triumph and His future return and Day of Judgement. It is essential that we as Christians return to observing Ascension Day as a holy day to our Faith. If something is important then we need to work it into our calendar.

## A Challenge

*“But”, you may protest, “how can we observe Ascension Day as a holiday*

*when the official government calendar does not recognise it as a public holiday?”*

People of different minority religions often observe their own holidays and maintain their cultural identity in spite of official policies. The Jewish, Muslim and Eastern Orthodox adherents observe feast days and fast days and other holy days different to us. We should have the courage of our convictions and the integrity to organise and structure our lives and work around what is important to our Christian Faith - not secular humanism with its “*Workers Day*”, “*Freedom Day*”, “*Women’s Day*”, “*Youth Day*” and “*Human Rights Day*”.

In our Mission we observe as holidays Ascension Day, Pentecost and other Christian holidays. I would strongly recommend that your church schedule special services for these monumentally important events. If it is not feasible to hold a service on the actual Ascension Day, at least dedicate the nearest Sunday to it to proclaiming the significance of the Ascension.

### **Other Important Days**

In addition, we observe the 31st October as **Reformation Day** - in remembrance of the great re-discovery of Biblical teaching and revival of freedom that followed after Martin Luther published his 95 Theses in Wittenberg on 31 October 1517.

We should also observe **International Life Chain Sunday** - on the first Sunday of October - and make a public stand for the right to life of pre-born babies. In South Africa, 1st February is the tragic anniversary of the legalisation of abortion upon demand. Africa Christian Action advocates that the closest Sunday to this anniversary be observed as **Sanctity Life Sunday** when every pulpit in the land should proclaim the Biblical principles that life begins at conception, all life is sacred and abortion is murder. This Sunday would also be observed as a national day of repentance for the national sin of abortion.

A Persecuted Church Sunday to remember those believers who are persecuted for their Faith; and a Sunday to focus on the unfinished task of missions - the Unreached People particularly of the 10-40 window of North Africa and Asia - would also be appropriate additions to any Christian calendar.

## **Sundays Are Special**

Habits and routine are a vital part of discipleship. We make time for those things we deem important. God has decreed that we work six days and give the seventh to rest and worship. This was so important to God that He gave us an example to follow, by resting after creating the universe. As Christians we should repent for allowing the Lord's Day to become so encroached upon and desecrated by shopping, sports and worldly entertainment.

The French revolutionary and atheist Voltaire declared: *"If you want to kill Christianity, you must abolish Sunday."*

Winston Churchill described Sunday as: *"a divine and priceless institution"*

D.L. Moody observed: *"Show me a nation that has given up the Sabbath and I will show you a nation that has the seeds of decay."*

J.C. Ryle challenged us: *"Common sense, reason, conscience will combine, I think, to say that if we cannot spare God one day in a week, we cannot be living as those ought to live who must die one day."*

Richard Baxter advised: *"See that the Lord's Day be spent in holy preparation for eternity."*

Any relationship needs quality time and we need to devote at least one day a week to developing and deepening our relationship with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

## **A Delight**

*"If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on My holy day, if you **call the Sabbath a delight** and the Lord's holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance..."* Isaiah 58:13-14

## **Healthy**

Setting aside the first day of the week as a special day is good for our body, mind and soul. We need time set aside for **relaxation, reflection** and **restoration**. It is a matter of **rhythm** and **routine**, but also a matter of **revelation** and **remembrance** of the Lord's great work of Creation (Exodus 20: 8-11 and salvation (Deuteronomy 5: 12-15). Resting one day

in seven is healthy - spiritually, emotionally, physically and economically. It is good for businesses, good for families and good for any country.

## **Witness**

By ordering our week to set apart the Lord's Day as a special day for the family to rest and worship the Lord - we proclaim to the world that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead and He is Lord of our lives.

## **The Bible Before Breakfast**

Our Relationship with our Lord should not be limited to Sundays. Every day we should begin the day with Bible reading and prayer. The Bible before breakfast is a good principle. Giving thanks before eating any meal is another good habit to remind us constantly of our dependence upon God and to give expression to our gratitude.

## **Walk with the Lord**

Some Christians maintain the practice of praying for protection before starting to drive their vehicles. Many have the principle of reading at least one chapter of the Bible each night. If you read just one chapter of the Bible each day (that is about 4 minutes) then you will read the Bible through in four years. A commitment to reading 4 chapters of the Bible each day (about 15 minutes) will enable you to complete the Bible in one year.

## **Daily Discipleship**

These principles of: **the Bible before breakfast, thanksgiving before meals, prayer before travelling, a Quiet Time before bed and one day in seven consecrated to rest and worship** on the Lord's Day would establish a solid foundation for discipleship. Then, by adhering to a Christian calendar we can reinforce our commitment to applying the Lordship of Christ to all areas of life.





## Chapter 13

### Christian Responsibility

- Jabesh-Gilead & the Ammonites

1 Samuel 11:1-11

#### **The Threat**

Now the people of Jabesh-Gilead were Israelites, but they were on the wrong side of the Jordan. They were on the East bank of the Jordan, and therefore they were cut off from the main body of the people of Israel, isolated and vulnerable to attack. They suddenly found themselves encircled, out numbered and threatened by the forces of Nahash the Ammonite.

#### **Perverted**

The Ammonites were Humanists - much like the Baal worshipers. Like modern-day Humanists, the Ammonites placed man at the center of all things and made man the measure of all things. Their worship was centered upon human symbols. They had a pornographic religion - the Ammonites worshiped statues of human sexual organs publicly displayed, perverted and distorted. This was the focus of their worship. They had temple prostitutes and orgies resulting in perversion and the abuse of women and children.

#### **Child Sacrificing**

The Ammonites also had a child sacrificing religion. Their pagan god, Molech, required human sacrifices of babies. Generally the first born child would be taken and placed in the arms of an idol of Molech. Their brass, or stone, statue of Molech had his arms held out to receive the babies which would be presented into the arms of the pagan idol. Fire underneath would consume the infants. This was the climax of their religious ceremony. As a fertility cult, the Ammonites believed that sacrificing their children would lead to increased crops and herds and therefore prosperity.

#### **Man Centered**

We can identify with this. We have the modern-day Ammonites, called Humanists, who have a very similar religion. The religion of Hollywood is Humanism. Modern-day Humanists, like the Baal worshipers and the

Ammonites, have a religion where man is the center of all things and man is the measure of all things. They rebel against the authority of God and reject God's law.

## **Those Who Hate God Love Death**

Modern-day Humanists also have a pornographic religion. They use pulpits and altars made of paper, electronics and celluloid. The television set, magazines and films - these are now the modern temples of Baal and Molech where they portray perverted orgies and distorted sexuality as the center of their worship. Pornography today seems to be an essential part of the religion of the Humanist. The modern-day Humanists also have a child sacrificing religion. The Bible says that those who hate God love death. The atheists who hate God love death. Therefore the modern-day Ammonites legalize abortion; the killing of the most innocent and helpless of all -pre-born children.

## **Killing Innocent Children**

What difference does it make if child sacrifice is done in a primitive environment; in a mud hut by a witchdoctor wearing skins with sharpened bones; or in a hospital down the road in a clinical environment with sophisticated sterilized equipment by a well-qualified doctor, with academic qualifications, in a white coat? There is no difference between abortion and child sacrifice. Both are the sacrificing of innocent blood; the killing of innocent life. In fact, abortion is just the sacrifice of children to the satanic god of convenience, valuing prosperity higher than posterity. We can understand what the people of Jabesh-Gilead must have felt like when they saw themselves encircled and out-numbered by this vast body of child sacrificing, pornographic, humanistic Ammonites.

## **Compromise Cripples**

Yet the incredible thing is that the men of Jabesh-Gilead went out to Nahash, saying "*Make a treaty with us, and we will be subject to you*". Let's just have some negotiations and we will be subject to you. You can rule us. You can ruin our society.

## **Craven Cowards**

What were they saying? The men of Jabesh were saying that they were willing for their society to be infiltrated, invaded and inundated with pornography and for their children's minds, morals and marriages to

be destroyed by this mind rotting, brain-dulling, sickening, exploitative industry of pornography. They were even willing to have their children or their grandchildren sacrificed to the satanic god of Molech!

### **Sadistic Cruelty**

But Nahash the Ammonite was not so reasonable: *“I will make a treaty with you only on the condition that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so bring disgrace on all Israeli”* No doubt Nahash the Ammonite was a sadist. Bear in mind that this would not have been a surgical operation done under anesthetic. No. They did not even have local anesthetic. They did not even have pain killers. This would have been a very painful operation to gouge out their right eyes.

### **Painful and Dangerous**

That is not all. They wouldn't have had antibiotics either. They certainly wouldn't have sterilized their instruments. You can be sure that the chances of infection were great in this kind of operation. We are talking about an exceedingly painful and dangerous operation.

### **Ensuring Enslavement**

Yet, Nahash the Ammonite was not just a sadist. He had another good reason for this mutilation. He wanted to ensure that the people of Jabesh-Gilead remained slaves of the Ammonites. He wanted to destroy their ability to fight. He wanted to cripple their ability to defend themselves. Gouging out the right eyes of the fighting men, would ensure that they wouldn't be as effective as soldiers. In the chaos of battle you need a full field of vision. Not having your right eye would certainly be a hindrance to a swordsman. Archers with bows and arrows and slingsmen would be at a disadvantage in their marksmanship if they lost their right eye. This would have meant that the people of Jabesh-Gilead would have been crippled and enslaved. Nahash was ensuring that at least the next generation would be slaves to the pagan idol Molech.

### **Spiritual Disarmament**

The modern-day Ammonites are still seeking to do that. They want to gouge out our right eyes - spiritually speaking. In America, where Humanists have taken over the public schools, they have made the Bible a forbidden book and prayer is illegal. Teachers are forbidden to present scientific evidences for creation in the classroom. The only theory of origins allowed

to be taught in the classroom, is the unproven, unprovable nonsense of evolution - *“once upon a time there was nothing, and that nothing became something, and that something became everything!”* How did this work? *“A whole lot of nothing and a whole lot of time made everything!”* From goo to the zoo to you. From mud to monkeys to man. They call this science. This is the only theory of origins allowed to be taught in Humanist schools. Not only that, but the Ten Commandments cannot be placed on the walls of a school. How terrible if a child should learn to honor their parents, or not to steal or murder, or not to covet or to bear false witness! You may have pornographic videos or posters in some classrooms, but not the Ten Commandments!

School teachers have been dismissed for reading the Bible during their free period in a public school. In America school children have been forbidden from reading the Bible on school buses on the way to school. You may have trouble believing all this, but this is what Humanists are doing. They so hate the Word of God that they want to gouge out **both** eyes of the children so that they can not discern right from wrong. Without the Bible we are spiritually defenseless before the pagans; they destroy minds, morals and pervert everything with their sex education and values clarification. When the Bible goes out, sex education and situation ethics comes in. Like the Ammonites, they have a perverted direction for worship. They do not worship God, instead they worship images made to look like mortal men. They worship not the Creator, but some of the things that have been created (Romans 1:21-25).

## **The Forbidden Book**

I experienced this on my first speaking tour to the USA in 1988. I had been invited to speak to a school about Africa, without the principal realizing I was a missionary. When the principal saw my Bible he asked, *“What’s that?”*

I said, *“It is a Bible.”*

He looked most alarmed and warned me: *“You are not allowed to read from the Bible, or quote from the Bible, or say anything about God or Jesus! Nothing religious! And you mustn’t pray! Do you understand?”* He looked dead serious. I understood.

After he introduced me I greeted the students and staff in the Name of

Jesus Christ - as I always do whether I am speaking in a mosque, a terrorist camp, or Parliament. Then I told them that their principal had forbidden me to mention God, or Jesus, or read from the Bible. I smiled and said: *"I spend my whole life breaking those laws in Communist countries!"* I went ahead, read from the Bible, preached Christ and even closed in prayer. I have not been invited back since, but that is not so important.

The point is that the modern-day Humanists also want to gouge out our children's spiritual eyes. In South Africa, they are working in a more insidious way. The first step is to get Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam into the schools on an equal basis with Christianity. New Age Interfaith is already in the schools through many text books. The next step will be to kick Christianity out. There are people involved in the Education Department who, at this stage, are working on getting the Bible out of South African schools; and all Bible education out as well. We have people trying to take out our spiritual eyes so that we cannot discern right from wrong. They are trying to make our children defenseless by prohibiting the Sword of the Spirit in schools.

## **Second Thoughts**

At this point the elders of Jabesh-Gilead suddenly had second thoughts about this negotiation process. They responded, *"Give us seven days so we can send messengers throughout Israel; if no one comes to rescue us, we will surrender to you."* What is happening here? The elders of Jabesh are saying, *"We do not mind you flooding our society with pornography; with the resultant child abuse and exploitation of women. We won't stop you sacrificing our children, our grandchildren, or our great-grandchildren to the satanic god of Molech. But do not inflict bodily harm upon ourselves!"* These men of Gilead were so backslidden, so lacking in the fear of the Lord, that they were willing to sell their children's future and eternal destinies before they were willing to suffer any bodily harm.

## **Cruelty and Cowardice**

You may also ask: *"Why would someone as evil and sadistic as Nahash the Ammonite give these people the opportunity to seek reinforcements from the rest of Israel?"*

First of all, warfare in those days adhered to a different code of conduct than today.

Secondly, Nahash was a Humanist and Humanists are cowards. Anyone who has been involved in combat against the modern-day Humanists and Atheists can testify along with me that these people are spineless bullies. They never seem to want to face real soldiers in battle. Communist terrorists could out distance armoured cars. They could run so fast, breaking Olympic records to escape from a firefight.

The Communists we opposed in Angola and South West Africa had no courage in standing up to real soldiers. That is why they almost never attacked the S.A.D.F. or S.W.A.T.F. soldiers. Instead, they attacked civilians. Their weapons of choice were bombs in shopping centres and landmines in the roads at night. They were brave when they were killing disarmed, defenceless civilians, but cowardly when facing real soldiers.

### **Confronting Communists with the Gospel**

The reasons behind this were expressed well by Colonel Jan Breytenbach. He is the Founder of 32 (Buffalo) Battalion, the South African Special Forces and 44 Parachute Battalion. When he came to Christ, he joined *Frontline Fellowship*. Colonel Breytenbach and I walked into Angola and preached the Gospel to Cuban troops and M.P.L.A. Communists during the UN 435 Cease Fire in 1989.

Colonel Breytenbach declared: *“My men and I, we have killed thousands of you - we never had any trouble killing you. Our trouble was catching you. You ran so fast. Why did you run so fast? Why were you so afraid? I know why. You are afraid of dying. You people have no assurance of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Your god is Karl Marx. Your religion is Atheism. You are all lost. You are damned! You are doomed You are en route to an eternity in hell. No wonder you run like the cowards you are. You are afraid of death. You should be afraid of death. If you knew what was waiting for you on the other side of eternal judgment, you would come across the border, fall on your knees and beg 32 Battalion troops to lead you to salvation in Christ.”* It was a dramatic outreach surrounded by shocked and hostile Communists, fingering their weapons.

### **Considering Their Options**

These Ammonites had three options. If they attacked the people of Jabesh Gilead in a frontal assault, they would have lost a substantial amount of men.

The second option was to besiege the city. To besiege the city could be a time-consuming exercise. It could take many months or even years of sanctions to starve the people into submission by destroying their economy.

His third option -to talk them into surrender. Negotiations. The prospects of gaining Jabesh-Gilead without a fight excited Nahash. Then he could gouge out eyes and sacrifice babies to his heart's content, which was every Ammonite's dream.

Thus he allowed the messengers to go out. Nahash the Ammonite was confident that the Israelites were as backslidden as the people of Jabesh-Gilead, and that they were too spineless and selfish to be concerned to come across the river and support their brethren on the wrong side of the Jordan.

## Servant Leadership

The messengers came to Gibeah, the capital of the new king, Saul. They reported these terms to the people. The people wept aloud. There was much sentiment - but no sacrifice. Many hearts were moved - but no one's feet were moved to action. Perhaps the people were saying, "*Why does not someone do something about this?*" But apparently nobody asked, "*What can I do?*"

Out of the fields - behind his oxen - came Saul. You may ask, "*What is the King doing in the fields behind his oxen?*" Why is he doing something useful and productive? Why isn't the king in his palace devising more legislation to complicate the lives of his people or imposing heavier taxes?

Well, perhaps it would solve a lot of our problems if we put more politicians behind the tractors in the fields where they could do something productive! Shouldn't the heads of state receive the same benefits as other civil servants? Ministers in the church are **ministers of grace**. Ministers in the government are **ministers of justice**. They both are ministers of God. The same word used in Romans 13 for *civil government* is used for *ministers in the church - deacons*. The state is the deacon of God. That is where we get the words "*civil servant*", "*prime minister*" and "*cabinet minister*" from - a minister is a servant. They have forgotten that.

An enormous amount of power, prestige, status, influence and financial reward has been attached to these political positions. As a result you tend

to get power-hungry, money-grabbing, status-seeking individuals seeking after those positions. It attracts the very worst kind of people. They climb over one another's heads, stab one another in the back, lie, cheat and deceive, doing anything they can to get into (and stay in) those positions of power.

Perhaps we should withdraw the incentive for such undesirable elements to seek such high office. What we should do is actually give presidents, cabinet ministers and members of parliament, exactly the same salary, privileges and fringe benefits as what teachers, policemen, firemen and nurses receive! Nurses, teachers, firemen and policemen often do a far harder and more important job as civil servants. They deserve the same rewards as a cabinet minister.

First of all, if you were to link their salaries, you would see that the teachers, nurses, policemen and firemen would be better paid.

Secondly, you would find that the status-seeking, power-hungry, money grabbing individuals would then choose to rather become chief executive officers of some corporation - where at least they would create some employment and pay taxes instead of the opposite.

## **Love and Anger**

King Saul returns from the fields behind his oxen and asks, *"Why are they weeping?"*

The people explained the drama to him. The people were treating their brethren across the river as a very interesting story - a soap opera. They were emotionally involved in it; they were crying about it; but they had not the slightest intention of getting out there and doing anything about it. As Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power and he burned with anger.

You may say, *"Wait a minute. That does not sound right. Surely if the Spirit of God comes upon someone, he would not burn with anger. Anger is a sin!"* When the Spirit of God comes upon a person, his heart is filled with warm fuzzy feelings. His heart would overflow with love for the Ammonites and he would go out and buy a bumper sticker for his ox-cart - *"Have you hugged an Ammonite today?"* Yet the Bible says that when the Spirit of God came upon Saul, he burned with anger.



The Bible says we must not let our anger lead us into sin (Ephesians 4:26). Anger is not necessarily sin. Most anger comes from pride and leads to sin, but there is such a thing as righteous indignation. There is such a thing as a holy anger. Our Lord Jesus Christ experienced this when he went into the temple and He saw God's house turned into a den of thieves. A place of prayer had been turned into a market place of corruption.

## **Corruption Desecrates the Temple**

At that time, worshipers had to bring a blood sacrifice. They would come along with a sheep or if they couldn't afford that, then a pigeon at least. What the priests had at that stage was some kind of *Temple Bureau of Standards* rip-off at the door. The priests would find some flaw with the sheep and reject it for not meeting the "*Temple Bureau of Standards*" requirements. These sheep would have to be left outside. *Temple Bureau of Standards* approved sheep were available inside the temple precinct. Once inside the worshiper couldn't use his secular, worldly shekels. They had to convert their money into holy, sacred, sanctified temple shekels through a money changer. The weights and measures were rigged so that one always somehow lost something on the deal.

This corruption was a big business for these people. The Lord saw not only the House of Prayer turned into a den of thieves, but He also saw that they were stealing from God's people. The Lord in anger, with a zeal for God's house consuming Him, made a whip and chased these criminals out of the temple, overturning the tables, setting the pigeons and sheep free. It must have been pandemonium there. Maybe you have asked yourself why nobody tried to stop our Lord? Where there is corruption, there often are body guards and bouncers.

## **The Wicked Love Darkness and Hate the Light**

When we have conducted outreaches outside the escort agencies (brothels) we have been assaulted, threatened, beaten up, with guns pushed into our necks. I was physically picked up off the ground by a man at least twice my weight and thrown over a vehicle into the road. On another occasion I had a bucket of beer and urine poured over my head. When you threaten people's corrupt business by standing outside their brothels handing out Gospel literature; when no customers are coming in any more; they tend to become vicious and violent. First they start swearing at you, then they try to inflict bodily harm. ***"Light has come into the world, but men love darkness instead of light because their deeds are evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light. . ."*** John 3:19-20.

## **Neither Weak nor Mild**

Why did none of these corrupt money changers in the temple physically stop Christ and throw Him out of the temple? Surely if Jesus was the anorexic figure with delicate fingers depicted in pictures, comics and so-called art of Christ, they would have stopped Him. However, Jesus Christ must have been extremely physically strong to have been a carpenter in Palestine. Carpenters in the first century couldn't just phone up Timber City to order a delivery of plywood. He couldn't just drive a pickup truck over with a chain saw to chop down some trees. He had to walk to the forest, chop down the trees with an axe and physically carry the timber home. Very tough, back-straining work.

## **Physically Strong**

In fact, if you look at a map of Israel, and compare it to the Gospel narratives, you will see that the routes Christ marched over were some of the most inhospitable territory. Our Lord must have been physically strong to have walked the distances He did, in that heat; and to have withstood the tortures inflicted upon Him with the whipping and with the crucifixion. Anyone who can fast for 40 days and 40 nights must be physically strong to survive that.

## **Distortion and Blasphemous Idolatry**

Our Lord was most certainly not the long-haired hippy so much art depicts him as. I Cor. 11:12 teaches that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace. Why would the Bible condemn long hair on a man if our Lord was the Renaissance figure which so many artists have imaginatively depicted Him as since the Middle Ages? We do not know what Jesus looked like. It is a blasphemous breach of the Second Commandment to try to portray Christ in this way.

## **The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom**

We do not know what He looked like, but we know this much: He must have been strong. Not only spiritually strong, but physically strong. These temple guards and these money changers did not dare stop him. I know why. I think that those eyes that were so full of love and compassion for the repentant, blazed with fury and anger that He struck fear into the hearts of the wicked on that day. I think the reason no one stopped Christ in the temple is because they were falling over themselves to get out of the way of His whip and to escape the penetrating glare of His eyes that were blazing with holy anger against the desecration of His house.

## **Zeal for God's House Consumes Him**

If the Lord took such drastic measures to cleanse the temple from mere financial corruption, what do you think He would do if He walked into many churches and church conferences where scenes of apostasy and deception abound? What would He have done if He had walked into the *World Council of Churches Conference* in Canberra where pornography was openly displayed and two women delegates were raped by other delegates; where they opened with pagan rituals such as passing through fire; calling up spirits of the dead; comparing Christ with Qwan In - an East Asian goddess of pity? What would He do if He walked into denominations today who are members of the World Council of Churches, claiming to be the Bride of Christ, but are actually whores of the world?

## **False Brethren**

When I was ministering outside the escort agencies, one of these pimps, a lady who ran a brothel, came to us and said that she was a “*Christian*”. Also, her brother was a minister and saw nothing wrong with what they were doing. All of her girls were “*Christians*” and “*in church every Sunday*”. I conceded the possibility, although I am sceptical, that all of her girls may well have been in some church every Sunday.

## **Apostate**

I said to her: “*That is possible madam and I can tell you what type of churches they belong to. Most probably the churches you go to are members of the World Council of Churches. They serve as brothels of the devil anyway. You might as well all become temple prostitutes and turn your churches into brothels because you could not possibly invite the wrath of God upon your congregations any more if you did than that which you already are doing with the World Council of Churches; promoting abortion, homosexuality and interfaith apostasy.*”

## **Blasphemy**

When you think of what is going on in South Africa, that you could actually have *Kruis en Kroniek* (Cross and Chronicle) -a religious programme -promoting abortion, pornography and blasphemy. They promoted abortion as “*the best choice*” and pornography as “*Christianity in practice*”! Leaders of the *South African Council of Churches* actively campaigned for *The Last Temptation of Christ* to be allowed into this country! When churches promote abortion, pornography and blasphemy

as the SACC and the WCC do, then you know there is good reason for righteous indignation.

## **Righteous Indignation**

God forgive us if we do not feel anger at the evils of abortion, pornography and blasphemy as Saul felt at this occasion here. There are times when we need to feel a godly anger - a righteous indignation - a holy anger. If we can not feel angry about the murder of innocent people even in a church service; if we can not feel angry about perversion and pornography being legalized; if we can not get angry over the killing of pre-born babies -then there is something terribly wrong with us.

*“To fear the Lord is to hate evil,”* Proverbs 8:13.

## **What Angers God?**

Notice that in I Samuel 11:6 it is God who was angry. Saul was so in touch with God’s heart that he shared God’s anger. **What was God angry at?** God was no doubt angry at the Ammonites and their man-centered, pornographic, child sacrificing, humanistic religion. Surely He was angry at their wicked plans for mutilating and oppressing the people of Jabesh-Gilead. This would have aroused the wrath of God upon the Ammonites.

## **The Curse of Compromise and Cowardice**

However, these matters are not the focus of God’s anger in this Scripture passage. It isn’t the wickedness of the wicked that has offended the heart of God in this instance. It is the passivity of God’s people that is the real target of His displeasure. It becomes quite clear as you read this passage that the pagans weren’t the greatest problem. It was God’s people who were the main problem. Once God’s people were mobilized to deal with the pagan threat and to deliver the people of Jabesh-Gilead, the Ammonites were dealt with quite decisively.

## **Do You Care?**

The real problem in 1 Samuel 11:1-11 is the passivity, fatalism, defeatism, inactivity and neutrality of God’s people. The thought that they could stand by and do nothing while their brethren across the river had their eyes gouged out; their children sacrificed; their society corrupted with pornography; that they could stand by and do absolutely nothing - this is what angered the heart of God. The core problem was the heartless

inactivity and passivity of God's people. The message of 1 Samuel 11 is very much the message of the Good Samaritan. You can not be neutral. You cannot just pass down on the other side of the road. Not to help is to harm. In the message of the Good Samaritan, you are responsible to get involved and help those in need (Luke 10:27-37).

### **Lack of Compassion**

I think of a certain illustration of a Christian who reported: *"Only this week I was on my way to a luncheon appointment. I saw a man bleeding in the gutter. People were passing by on both sides of the road and no one stopped! No one was doing anything to help this man. And when I came back from lunch an hour later, he was still there! No one had helped him!"*

### **Why Does Somebody not Do Something!**

Often when we hear of desperate needs, we react: *"Why does not somebody do something?"* We hear someone talking on a problem or sin and say: *"I am so glad so-and-so is here. He needs to hear that."* When we hear mission messages, we respond with, *"Here am I Lord, send my sister!"*

### **Failure to Care**

Very seldom do we think that the Lord could actually be speaking to us. It becomes quite clear in the Lord's description of Judgment Day of Matthew 25, we are not so much judged for what we have done as much as for what we have not done. *"You did not clothe the naked, you did not feed the hungry, you did not care for the sick, you did not visit those in prison for their faith Go to hell. I can never forgive you. You did not care."* That basically is what Matthew 25 is saying. If we do not care enough to step out and meet the needs of the brethren in need, that heartless attitude invites God's wrath upon us.

### **A Shocking Sermon Illustration**

As the Spirit of God came upon Saul, he burned with anger, and chopped up an ox into pieces. He sent the bloody pieces by messengers throughout Israel and warned, *"This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul or Samuel."*

### **Galvanised into Action**

Soon a vast force of 330 000 men had volunteered. There were no volunteers before when they had heard of the threat to Jabesh-Gilead. But when they

heard of the threat to their oxen, they all turned out! This means that the people of Israel were more concerned about their material possessions than they were for the well-being of their brethren across the river.

### **What Would You Do?**

Let me give you an example. Your pastor stands up on Sunday and says, *“We are going to stand for the right to life for pre-born babies! Next Saturday let us as a congregation gather outside the local abortion clinic. We’re going to have those who are trained in counselling to be sidewalk counselors, to try and persuade those mothers who may be coming in this time of crisis and considering taking their baby’s life, not to abort their child but rather to consider adoption. We are going to, through our church, support the local Crisis Pregnancy Centre. Some families will open their homes to look after unwed mothers until they carry the baby to full term. We will help them. We will have literature available to distribute to let the people know about the right to life of the pre-born, when life begins, that the baby’s heart starts beating at three weeks, and the brain wave at six weeks. Meanwhile the rest of the congregation will have placards and will physically stand between the potential victims and the potential murderers. Next Saturday we will meet at 9:00 o’clock at the abortuary.”*

### **A Matter of Priority**

Next Saturday comes and nobody turns up! On Sunday, your pastor stands up in the pulpit, pulls out a chain-saw, starts it up, walks outside and chops a motor car into pieces. He says, *“This is what I am going to do to the motor cars of anyone who does not turn out for next weeks pro-life demonstration. Those of you who do not have cars, I will get your television sets!”* The next Saturday, everybody turns out. Now if that happened, that would mean we are more concerned for our material possessions than we are for the lives of pre-born babies.

### **Would Money Motivate You to Action?**

Let us give another illustration: As we live in a materialistic society, forgive me for making a very materialistic illustration. What if your church said that for every person you lead to Christ through evangelism and counseling, you would be given R1 000. For every hour you spend in prayer, you will get R100. If this was seriously offered, and if you prayed more and evangelized more as a result, that would mean that you loved money more than you loved Christ.

It does no harm for us to search our hearts and ask ourselves: really and truly, am I caring for my neighbor, or am I actually more concerned for my own material wealth and comfort?

### **The Fear of the Lord**

The fear of the Lord fell upon the people. In fact, it says, "*The TERROR of the Lord fell upon the people and they turned out as one man.*" This is the real problem in the Church - there is a lack of the fear of the Lord. Once the people experienced the fear of the Lord, there was no problem mobilizing the army. What was needed was for one individual to be open to the Spirit of God and to be sensitive to God and then to communicate God's will adequately enough to mobilize the people. But the people were only mobilized when the fear of the Lord fell upon them. That is the missing dimension in most of our churches today. In fact, the fear of man seems to dominate most of our churches. Spinelessness, cowardice and compromise have allowed the great escalation of evil in our society. We aren't being Salt and Light if we fear what man says rather than what God says.

### **We Need to Call for Help**

We need fellow-believers to rally to our aid. There is a time in every one of our lives when we cannot handle the pressures on our own. When we are out numbered, out-gunned, and we can not handle it - then we need to call for brethren to back us up. We need to be ready to do that. We mustn't try to do it all alone like *Rambo* or *the Lone Ranger*. We have got to be willing to say, "*I need the Body of Christ to help me.*" Maybe you need counseling, or to seek practical, spiritual help. We can not handle every fight and problem on our own. We need fellow-believers to rally to our aid. We also need to keep our ears and eyes open, sensitive to the needs of other people who need fellow-believers to rally to their aid. This is the essence of the message here.

### **"You Will Be Delivered!"**

As the people gathered together, Saul told the messengers from Jabesh-Gilead, "*Tell your people that by the time the sun is hot tomorrow, you will be delivered.*" How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bears good news. It's wonderful to bear good news! Especially to captives.

## **Setting Captives Free**

As someone who has been a prisoner in Communist prisons in Mozambique and Zambia, I believe there are few experiences better than getting out of those rat-infested, disease-ridden, filth-filled cells; to be able to have a hot bath; some real food; and to be out of the control of sadistic people without any consciences who can inflict whatever torture they desire upon you. To tell a prisoner, “*You will be delivered,*” is a wonderful thing.

## **Incarcerated**

When I was a prisoner in Zambia in Lusaka Central Prison, there were over a thousand prisoners in a very confined area without a single toilet or a single tap that worked, with no running water, no plumbing, and no sanitation. It was a stinking disease factory. The cells were 25 ft. x 15 ft. There were 60 prisoners per cell. Some cells had 65. There were no beds, no mattresses, everyone was just sleeping on the floor, and no windows. There was just one little opening in the door. You can just imagine the suffocating heat, stench and degradation.

## **Tortured**

There was a prisoner I met who was a South African soldier. Isaiah Moyo - an ex-Rhodesian African Rifles and Selous Scout operator. He had been working for 5 Reconnaissance Commando and had been spying out terrorist bases. He had been working to stop several car bombing attempts that would have hit our streets. A brave man. He was in prison and he had been there eighteen months. All over his body he had red-hot poker sores where they would pressed metal pokers straight from the fire into his body. He had these pussy sores all over his body. He had been electrocuted repeatedly. He had been drowned upside down in buckets of water repeatedly, and so on. He was a dedicated Christian who loved the Lord. His knees were calloused from the amount of time he spent on them in prayer on that concrete cell floor. Isaiah was a wonderful brother - we had great times of fellowship with him.

## **Set Free**

Our Mission was well organized. Within a few days of us being imprisoned, they had demonstrations and prayer vigils outside the Zambian Embassy in Washington and London. Literally thousands of phone calls and letters were received by the Zambian Embassies in London, Washington and in



other parts of the world. The Zambians wanted foreign aid more than foreign prisoners. So after a couple of weeks they let us go. When I was freed, I felt bad to leave Isaiah.

## **Abandoned**

Poor Isaiah only had the South African government to get him out! He was still there after eighteen months, despite the fact that 85% of Zambian imports and exports came through South Africa. All their railway locomotives and their airways were serviced by South Africa. Despite all that Zambian dependence on South Africa, this South African soldier was still in a Zambian prison. He only had the government to back him; we had a little mission that managed to get us out.

## **Speaking Up for the Prisoners**

As I was leaving I said to him, *“Isaiah, we will get you out. You will be delivered.”* I went overseas; I went to the *International Society of Human Rights* convention; I spoke on radio and T.V. in Germany, England and America. I also spoke on BBC’s Africa Service.

A Zambian prison guard rushed into Isaiah’s cell with a radio and said,

*“That missionary who was here - he is talking about you!”* Isaiah was able to hear me giving his testimony over the Africa Service of BBC. What a big encouragement! Soon they were dragging sacks of letters and parcels into his cell. The moment we started publicizing his plight, the torture stopped, he became popular and they treated him properly. He started getting better food - and eventually we organised his release.

By God’s grace, we managed to get a lot of other prisoners out too. When I was locked up in Mozambique I found three Reconnaissance Commando operators who had been there five years. One black soldier and two white soldiers -they had been locked up for five years in Machava Security Prison, in Maputo. When we were released, I had their details memorized. I went to the Foreign Affairs’ people asking, *“Did you know about them?”* *“Yes we did,”* one responded.

I said, *“They have not received a letter, a parcel, or a visit in five years. What have you been doing?”*

*“Oh, we did not want to endanger their lives,”* they said.

I responded: “*You cannot get more endangered than in the hands of SNASP Security Police in Machava Security Prison. Why did not you send them some soap? Some biscuits? Some antibiotics? Some malaria tablets? Some vitamin tablets? Why did not you send them some books to read? Why couldn’t you send them a letter? These men have been there five years. Do you know what five hours are like in that prison?*”

The Foreign Affairs’ official just looked at the ground and mumbled: “*Oh, it’s so difficult. . .*”

## **Mobilising Prayer and Action**

We got their story published. Very small articles, in fact. Yet they were released soon afterwards. People rot in prisons not so much because of the wicked. They rot in prison because good people are doing nothing. Whenever we have mobilized to get prisoners out, we have succeeded in seeing them released. Sometimes it’s been a hard battle for many months. In some cases it went over a year to campaign to get them out. But we got them all out. If we could do it with our miserably small resources, our tiny little mission, you can be sure that governments could do it. But they generally do not do it. Why? Because Christian citizens do not seem to care enough to pressurise them to do it. **Publicity provides protection for the persecuted.**

## **You Cannot Be Neutral**

What it also tells me is that if we had tried harder, if we had known more, we would have had other prisoners out even earlier. What it says to me is: ***all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.*** Do we realize the power that is within the Church and within our grasp? Do we realize how much suffering occurs because of the inactivity and the passivity and the heartlessness and the neutrality of God’s people who sit by with limp hands saying,

## **What Can I Do?**

“*Why does not somebody do something about it?*” When they should say, “*What can I do about it?*”

The people of Jabesh-Gilead were told, “*Tomorrow you will be delivered,*” and they were. Saul used wise strategy, perfect timing and he broke into the camp of the Ammonites when they were least expecting it in the early hours of the morning. He totally destroyed the wicked and completely delivered God’s people.

The message is that we need to rally to the aid of fellow believers. We need to listen and respond when fellow-believers are needing aid. The message, like the message of the Good Samaritan is: **you cannot be neutral**. The message is that **we need the fear of the Lord**. We need to be so open to the Spirit of God that we feel what God feels. That we **love those whom God loves and that we hate that which God hates**.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 12:30: ***“He who is not with Me is against Me. He who is not helping Me gather is scattering.”***

In I Kings 18:21, Elijah challenged the people of Israel: ***“How long will you waiver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, serve Him. If Baal is god, serve him.”***

The Lord God challenges us in Psalm 94: 16: ***“Who will rise up for Me against the wicked? Who will make a stand for Me against the workers of iniquity?”***

We need to answer in the words of Joshua 24:15: ***“Choose for yourself this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”***

We need to **put feet to our Faith**.



## Chapter 14

### Mountain Marathons

It was hot. Extremely hot. Already 45° Celcius (110°F) in the shade and we weren't in the shade! The palm trees and occasional camels reminded me that we were in North Africa - at the Southernmost edge of the vast Sahara Desert. The steep rocky mountain slopes that we had repeatedly traversed are part of the Nuba Mountains of Central Sudan. Our GPS (Global Positioning System) confirmed that we were inside the famed 10-40 *window* - at 11° latitude in fact.

#### **Appointment with an Ambush**

I was somewhat delirious and dehydrated from heat exhaustion, but I knew we were out of both food and water. Just to move was agony. My every muscle ached (even ones that I did not know I had). That was not too surprising - just in the past three days we had walked over 100 km up and down precarious paths over dozens of mountains and across a great open plain - between enemy garrisons.

The previous day we had started out at 3 a.m. and climbed silently up and down steep mountains and walked for 12 hours. Then we had delivered Bibles, books, agricultural tools and seed to a village and showed the “*Jesus*” film in Arabic to the entire community.

We had barely fallen asleep when my alarm sounded at 2 a.m. and we started out on a five hour climb and hike to an airstrip. Unknown to us the radio message we were responding to was false. Our evacuation flight had not been diverted to this remote airstrip. Instead, Arab soldiers of the National Islamic Front (NIF) government of Sudan were heading to that same airstrip to ambush us.

It had already been a stunning mission of great extremes. Extreme terrain. Oppressive heat, unrelenting, mind numbing heat. Yet some nights were quite cold. There had been vast distances to be covered - first by air over 3 hours into Central Sudan, far behind enemy lines. Then many hours and days of walking up and down the jagged Nuba Mountains.

The needs we confronted were desperate. Many people were hungry,

some starving. The NIF government of Sudan (GOS) has declared *Jihad* (holy war) and is waging a cruel and relentless scorched earth campaign against the Nuba people. Most of the Nuba villages have been looted and destroyed. Most of their crops have been burned. Most of their livestock has been stolen. Even wells have been poisoned in what the GOS calls “*Tamsit*” (combing). As one GOS official so ruthlessly put it: “*We are draining the sea to catch the fish!*” Everything necessary to sustain life is a target to be destroyed by the GOS forces.

Most of the Nubans are dressed in threadbare clothes or tattered rags. Many are completely naked. They have fled up the mountains to escape from the fertile plains which are now dominated and devastated by the marauding GOS forces.

### **Rock of Ages**

The Nuba Mountains cover an area of 50 000 square kilometres. Some of the mountains rise to 1 500 metres above sea level. These mountains are natural fortresses with very steep slopes. A handful of men in key positions can (and do) easily protect the precarious paths that wind precipitously up through the rocks. Life, and travel, in these mountainous sanctuaries is extremely harsh. The heat is merciless. The terrain is severe - rocky, steep and thorn bush covered. Every day the women have to walk up to six hours away from their village in order to collect water. They then balance the containers on their heads for the long, careful, steep ascent back to their village. Most Nubans are barefoot. The fortunate ones have some sandals. Shoes are rare.

The Nubans are Black people who speak Arabic. They are geographically and culturally a frontier between the Arab North and the Black South. After the collapse of the Ancient Christian kingdoms of Nubia, Alwa and Dotawo, and the Islamic invasion of the North of Sudan around the 15th Century, many of the survivors took refuge in the Nuba Mountains. Then, over the centuries, escaped slaves from the human cargo of Arab caravans en route from the heart of Africa to the Muslim world fled to the Nuba Mountains for refuge.

The architecture of homes in the Nuba reflect this diversity of origins. Some homes are built of dry stone reminiscent of the Zimbabwe Ruins, others of clay with circular doors similar to those found amongst the Dogon in Mali. There are more than 50 distinct ethnic groups in the Nuba.

## **Islamic Jihad**

The official government policy of Islamisation (carried on since 1922) has succeeded in persuading 40% of the Nuba to become (at least nominally) Muslim. But even these Nuban Muslims are united with the Christian majority in opposing the NIF government in Khartoum. Most of the Nuba churches have been destroyed. About one million Nubans have been forced into concentration camps.

In these camps children are separated from their parents and family and are indoctrinated into the fundamentalist brand of Islam adhered to by the NIF government. Later these children will be brainwashed to wage *Jihad* against their own people. Nuba women have been methodically raped in these camps so that the next generation will be more Arab than Nuba.

About 400 000 Nubans are holding out in the liberated areas controlled by the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army - Nuba (SPLA-N) resistance movement. These Arabic speaking Nuba people are an island of Christianity in a sea of Islam. These brave and resilient people have steadfastly resisted all attempts to subjugate or annihilate them.

## **Behind Enemy Lines**

That is why we had travelled over 8000km from Cape Town, in South Africa, to help these desperately needy and courageous people. Our charter aircraft had flown in four metric tonnes of Bibles, books, Gospel booklets, educational materials, agricultural tools and vegetable seed.

As we had landed on the dry, dusty airstrip I could see armed men walking through the cloud of dust towards us. I fervently prayed that these were SPLA soldiers and not GOS troops! The intense Nuban heat hit me as I opened the aircraft door and climbed out to greet the soldiers. They welcomed us warmly. The officer in charge quickly organised a work party to off-load our aircraft.

The pilot was somewhat impatient to take off as quickly as possible. *“This airstrip is within artillery range of the nearby GOS garrison. They have mortared this airstrip before”*, he explained. As we watched our charter aircraft take off we felt something like Cortes must have felt after burning his ships! We were far behind enemy lines in the midst of the longest war of this century.

One of our missionaries pointed out to me where they had run for cover when the GOS helicopter gunships had attacked the mission team last year. They had no sooner landed and off-loaded the Bibles and relief aid when two Mi-24 Hind helicopter gunships came roaring over this very same landing strip - pouring machine cannon fire and rockets directly into the midst of the crowd that had assembled to receive the aid. The gunships circled and made repeated strafing runs over the area. They systematically rocketed and shot wherever people were fleeing.

The team saw two Nuba women shredded by machine cannon fire. Missiles were fired. Huge holders were blown to pieces. The ground was churned up by the machine gun fire as they sprinted for cover. Our men ran through a gauntlet of shrapnel and bullets and escaped up the mountain to a secure area controlled by the resistance movement. *“You are the first visitors we have ever had in this area. Nobody has ever brought us any aid before,”* they were told.

When our mission returned to the Nuba Mountains later that year, with over 5 000 Bibles and books, the local Christians were very surprised and greatly encouraged. *“We thought you’d never come back, you have encouraged us with your return,”* declared one church leader.

## **Body, Mind and Spirit**

There was even more excitement this time as they saw us return yet again - with more people and many more Bibles, books (over 10 000 Gospel booklets, books and Bibles - mostly in Arabic) and relief aid. They recognised that the materials we had brought represented the sacrifices, love and prayers of hundreds of others from around the world. To know that they are not alone, that they are not forgotten is a great encouragement to these long suffering people. It was also clear that they appreciated the commitment of Frontline Fellowship to keep coming back.

Our ministry strategy in the Nuba is to minister to body, mind and spirit. For this reason we transported in and distributed: one tonne of vegetable seed, farming tools (hundreds of axes, hoes and machetes) and 100 water containers (20 litre jerry cans) - for the desperate physical needs; one tonne of school materials, school textbooks, exercise books, charts, blackboards and chalk- for the educational needs; and two tonnes of Bibles (1 400 full Bibles in Arabic), Christian books (over 2 000) and Gospel booklets (over 7 000), as well as Gospel Recordings *Messengers*, and the *Jesus* film in

Arabic - for the spiritual needs.

Almost every day we walked to a different village. My brother, who co-ordinated our *Love in Action* ministry, personally distributed the agricultural tools, seed and other relief items to the leaders of 11 different congregations. I would bring greetings, proclaim the Gospel and entrust a library of books and a box of Gospel Literature to the local pastor. We would then present Bible stories to the people using the Gospel Recordings *Messengers* (tough tape recorders that can be solar powered or hand wound) with flip charts. These audio visual presentations always drew large crowds and held the people riveted as they heard the Bible message in Arabic and saw it illustrated in dramatic colourful illustrations. As on previous missions, we entrusted these tape recorders, each with a full set of nine audio cassettes and flip charts (about 9 hours of Bibles stories with accompanying pictures), to trusted evangelists and pastors in remote areas.

## **Getting There Before Hollywood**

Then, each night when the sun set, we would rig up a large canvas screen, crank up the generator and show the *Jesus* film in Arabic with the 16 mm projector. Many hundreds, sometimes thousands, of soldiers and civilians would come to see this two hour Gospel film. For the vast majority of the people it was the first time they had ever seen any film. (It is always good to get there with the Gospel - before Hollywood!)

The Nuba people certainly could relate to the *Jesus* film better than most of us could. They are a rural people dependent on farming and livestock for survival, whose only form of transportation is by foot. And under Islamic Sharia law, Christians are flogged and crucified in the Nuba Mountains. (GOS troops have even used live crucified Christians as target practise.)

Some may question the value of using films for evangelism. We warn the people that what we are about to show them is only a film with actors. Nobody knows what Jesus actually looked like - nor do we need to - it is what He taught and did that is important. And every word in the film is from the Gospel of Luke. It is impossible for us to appreciate the enormous impact that audio visual presentations of the Gospel have - especially on rural people in remote areas. This made the logistical challenge of carrying a 16 mm projector and generator up and down innumerable mountains in scorching heat well worthwhile.



There were nights when it seemed impossible to screen the film - in rain, shielding the projector during a dust storm, with the sound of heavy weapons in the background, with Arab forces flares lighting up the night. Yet we managed to screen the *Jesus* film in eight different areas of the Nuba Mountains.

In a war zone like the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, every mission is dangerous. Every day has its risks. A foreigner attracts intense interest and the GOS offers great rewards for any information on foreign visitors. Therefore, we have to keep moving to different villages under serious time constraints. How then can we clearly communicate as much of the Gospel and discipleship principles to these suffering rural people in a language they understand, in as short a time as possible? We have found that a combination of Gospel Recordings Bible stories and the *Jesus* film in Arabic are very effective communication tools. After these audio visual presentations, we preach the Gospel, distribute Gospel literature and entrust a library of discipleship books to the local church.

### **The Gospel vs Jihad**

Over the last decades the Nubans have endured a cruel and relentless scorched earth campaign. Bibles have been illegal. Missionaries have been banned. All flights, even relief aid flights, have been forbidden. All contact with the outside world has been cut off. The Nubans have been isolated, persecuted and targeted for destruction. Yet these brave and beleaguered people have steadfastly refused to give up. They continue to survive and persevere - to fight for their Faith and for freedom. Yet they felt so alone. A hidden people fighting a forgotten war for survival.

By our threefold ministries of Love in Action, Literature distribution and Leadership training we are strengthening the believers in Sudan to not only survive the severe persecution, but also to win their persecutors to Christ. We had the great joy of seeing even people from a Muslim background committing themselves to Christ during this mission.

### **Mutilations and Landmines**

The harshness of the National Islamic Front (NIF) government of Sudan was very evident. We walked over the scorched earth, passed burned out homes and fields. We met people who had been mutilated by the Arab government forces. Under *Sharia law* amputation of limbs is decreed

for various offences. We spoke with amputees who had had arms or feet cut off by the Muslims. One man, James Krama, a 52 year old father of 5 children, and an Episcopal church member, related to me how the NIF soldiers had come and destroyed his village, Adudu, on 26 February 1997. The Arabs had accused him of supporting “*the rebels*” and after a week of fruitless interrogation they cut off his arm at the elbow.

Many others have lost limbs to landmines. As we were loading our charter aircraft in preparation to fly into the Nuba, two Nubans who had lost feet to landmines and had now recovered asked if we would please take them with us. Although they had lost limbs they were cheerful and delighted to be able to fly back home - even though we were flying back to a war zone. Our aircraft risked being shot down as it violated the GOS flight ban and once safely landed these amputees would need to negotiate mountains on crutches. They would also face, once again, the real dangers of landmines, slave raids and aerial bombardments. Nevertheless, they were eager to go “*home*” to the Nuba Mountains!

On landing in the Nuba we were asked if six wounded Nubans (most from landmines) could be evacuated by our charter aircraft. We were glad to see them airlifted to safety and medical treatment at the Red Cross hospital in Kenya, yet it was sobering to be so forcibly reminded that we were about to walk many hours in an area where landmines (the devil’s seed) had been sown. Then there was the real possibility of an ambush or air attack.

We often heard Antonov bombers or GOS reconnaissance aircraft in the distance. Our eyes continually scanned the skies, the horizons and the bushes for any signs of danger. The intense concentration of anticipating an attack, realising that each step could be our last, makes one thoughtful and prayerful. From the tops of some mountains we were shown the Arab government garrisons. On some of our night hikes strict silence had to be maintained as we walked between enemy garrisons on the plain.

## **Record Breaking Column**

During our outreach to the Nuba Mountains we walked about 180 km with 16mm film projector, generator, fuel and film, with boxes of Gospel literature, up and down the steep mountain slopes. Our initial column of volunteers to carry the four tonnes of Bibles, Gospel literature, 16 mm projector, reels, generator, fuel, books, seed and agricultural tools up the mountain was over 250 strong- including porters/ carriers and military escorts.

It was an impressive sight seeing the long column of people briskly moving up the steep mountain slopes, snaking through the mountain valleys, cheerfully carrying the four tonnes of Bibles, books and relief aid. Most of the carriers were women. They explained that the men were away in the army, fighting the Arabs. Yet it seemed that in their culture the women normally carried the heavy loads!

According to one history book, one of the longest human columns was the Safari of ex-US President Theodore Roosevelt in Kenya in 1909. His column consisted of 100 porters, with an average of 60 pounds to carry. Our column consisted of 200 carriers and 50 soldiers (escorts). The average load carried was 25 kg (almost 60 pounds).

## Mountain Marathons

At one point of the steep ascent whilst sweating profusely, I noticed the one legged Nuban woman (whom we had transported in on the aircraft) hop past me on her crutches! I was shocked - and inspired to step up my pace accordingly! The harsh terrain and vicious scorched earth campaign being waged against them, combined with their tenacious Faith, have made the Nubans incredibly tough.

At one point Derek exclaimed: *"I run, swim or go to the gym virtually every day of the week. I have run the Comrades and Two Oceans Marathons. How is it possible that these people can leave me in the dust?"* Although I do not maintain the same level of fitness as my brother, I felt similarly impressed by our Nuban friends *"mountain goat"* fitness. Steve had represented South Africa in long distance hikes and speed marches in the Swiss Alps. He did a lot better, but also had to push himself to keep up with their cracking pace. A lifetime of walking in the Nuba Mountains gave our hosts a natural advantage!

Each day I forced my body to climb and walk faster. Ignoring blisters on my feet, aching muscles and the chaffing that seemed to rub the insides of my thighs raw, I pushed on. On one particular day I was up with the advance party of military escorts maintaining their pace for several hours. It was gratifying at the top of one of the highest mountains to have some of them compliment my efforts. *"You are very strong, very fast, strong like a Nuba!"* declared one. I felt half dead at the time, but that encouragement inspired me to keep on keeping on! On another memorable occasion I was informed that we had walked in 12 hours what another team had taken three days to cover.

## **“Everyone can be a Missionary”**

During those long, hot days of walking I thought often of an article in *Today*, a popular Christian magazine that I had read just prior to the mission. It was entitled “*Everyone Can Be A Missionary!*” Under the circumstances the title seemed more than incongruous. Of course, I believe every Christian should be missionary minded and prayerfully support mission work. And naturally every Christian should be a witness to others. However, the tasks and calling of a missionary demands total life long commitment, dedication in training and perseverance in service.

Can everyone be a doctor, an engineer, a pilot, or a mother? It seemed to me that the article had devalued the calling of a missionary. The writer of the article had apparently based her amazing conclusion that “*everyone can be a missionary*” on her two week trip to Malawi.

Well, I have received first aid training and have administered first aid to injured people - but I would never call myself a doctor or a nurse! Everyone should learn how to handle basic first aid in an emergency, but we are fooling ourselves if we confuse what we dabble in, almost as a hobby, with the specialised training, experience and responsibilities of a career professional. This is the same in missions. Cross cultural communication and church planting amongst Animists or Muslims is extremely difficult and requires thorough preparation and a life time commitment.

The technological advantages our generation has over previous generations of missionaries is astounding. It took David Livingstone many weeks by boat and over four months by ox-cart to reach his first mission station at Kuruman. It took him years to walk across Africa - journeys that we can now complete in hours by air and days by four wheel drive vehicles. However, while it is infinitely easier to reach the mission fields today - it is also all too easy to leave.

This modern mobility is therefore both a blessing and a curse. Fast, easy travel has also led to the whole problem of superficiality and shallowness in missions. The hectic schedules and packed programmes of short-termers cannot measure up to the impact of a dedicated career missionary couple settling amongst an unreached people and investing their lives in discipling a community.

Have we sacrificed quality for quantity? Are we substituting Relief Aid for Reformation and Revival? We have not been called to make converts, but disciples. Patrick Johnstone's conclusion is that we should only invest in short term mission workers when they are being used in an ongoing ministry for long term goals.

So, can anybody be a missionary? No, most people aren't even Christians. Can every Christian be a missionary? No, because many Christians are selfish, hyper-sensitive to criticism and unwilling to suffer discomfort, let alone danger and diseases. All Christians are called to be faithful witnesses evangelising their neighbours and colleagues at work. All Christians are called to support missions - but each of us have different life callings and responsibilities.

### **The “Glamour” of Missions**

Another phrase that was discussed at length by our mission team in the Nuba was “*the glamour of missions.*” Some people express the view that missionary work is glamorous! As you can imagine, this became the brunt of many a joke in the Nuba Mountains.

Glamorous? Missions is exciting, yes! Challenging, definitely! Glamorous - hardly ever! Yes, we do sometimes have singing choirs welcoming us to remote villages, and large crowds at services. But, in between there is sweltering heat, dust storms, flies, dysentery, boils, sunburn, backache, blisters and malaria.

There is seldom any privacy as the children in particular find strange foreigners like ourselves fascinating. They crowd around, touching, pulling, examining and peeping at every opportunity. Nights are mostly sleepless - either because of mosquitos and other flying, crawling and biting insects or because of the disturbing noises, particularly gunfire, but also dogs barking and roosters crowing (sometimes from as early as 2:30 a.m.) - right in our huts!

Then we could mention howling dust storms, dust in our hair, ears, eyes, nose, mouth, in fact in everything -including the 16mm projector causing endless jams! The micro organisms in the water are too small to see with the unaided eye, but they can certainly cause great discomfort, pain and sickness. In Sudan every drop of water we cook our food in or drink needs to be filtered and boiled. However, it would be rude not to accept any food or water offered by any local host. Inevitably, on every field trip, we end up

sick with some form of dysentery, or worse. What we pray never to suffer from is the life long diseases caused by guinea worm or “*river blindness*.”

Some of the other “*glamorous*” aspects of missions which we experienced on this mission included: walking all day to an empty church only to find that the organiser hadn’t organised anything; sleeping amidst the goats in a corral covered in cow dung and goat droppings; and being put up in a cave where all the men crowded in to have a meal in our “*bedroom*” - spitting bones onto our floor and packs while dogs and chickens raced in to pick up the scraps of food littered over our sleeping area!

One night we were plagued by rats. They scurried all over the walls, roof, floor, and our packs. (My one canvas bag still has all the holes made by the rats as they sought to reach our food). We batted them away with machetes. Yet they still came on. When we finally went to sleep it was with a machete in one hand and a flashlight in the other. As we warded off rats climbing onto his bed, I quipped: “*While you have your hands full - with the machete and flashlight - do be careful of swatting any mosquitos that land on your nose!*”

On another occasion, we were caught up in a chaotic riot when we attempted to distribute Gospel tracts in a market place. The people literally fought to obtain a tract.

Time and space preclude me from describing all the problems caused by cross cultural confusion, miscommunication, deceptions, thefts, bureaucratic obstructionism and other man made disasters.

## **Maintaining a Sense of Humour**

Of course it is essential to maintain a good sense of humour in the field. The Nuba Christians do. James, whose one arm had been amputated by the Arabs, picked up one of our machetes from the selection of farm tools I offered him. With a glint in his eyes he exclaimed: “*Jalabas!*” (the nickname for the Arabs). Another man who had lost his leg smiled as he extended his right arm and his fore finger: “*At least I still have my trigger finger!*”

It was a mission of extremes. Extreme heat, extreme exertion and extremely good opportunities for ministry. Many thousands made public commitments to Christ in response to our 63 evangelistic and teaching messages in the Nuba.

Now we were walking in the dark to a remote airstrip for our evacuation flight. “*We are very close now!*” said our guide. Yes, they would said that several times in the last few hours. I mentally checked through the list of “*gems*”:

“*It never rains this time of the year*” (That night our open air film showing was washed out in a rain storm).

“*The Arabs never operate at night and they never try to come up on the mountains.*” (That night we were woken up by heavy gunfire close by as the SPLA fought off an attempt by the Arabs to come up the mountain. Several days later an Arab attack at the same location killed several people.

“*It is okay to drink. The water is safe.*” (I got terribly sick from that one cup of water).

“*It never gets cold in the Nuba.*” (In fact, we did get very cold on a couple of wind blown nights, but I had left my sleeping bag behind to save weight).

“*It cannot get worse*” (Yet day by day, conditions did deteriorate into ever greater challenges!)

## **Evading The Enemy**

A breathless soldier startled me out of my thoughts “*Security alert!*” he shouted. “*The aircraft is not coming to this airstrip!*” It turned out that we had woken up at 2 a.m. and hiked five hours to this location in vain. The radio message we had received at 10 p.m. the previous night had been false. At that very moment GOS forces were moving into the area. Only by God’s grace did we escape an ambush laid by the GOS at the airstrip.

That night our military escort laid ambush positions around our camp. We knew that the GOS forces were nearby. Our kit was packed. We slept fitfully, waking at every sound. We were ready to sling our backpacks and run at a moment’s notice. Suddenly at midnight we were awoken by furious bursts of machine gun fire - very close by. We scrambled for our kit and prepared to move.

“*Everything is under control - you can rest,*” the leader assured us.

However, he related to us news of a build up of enemy forces not too far away threatening the village where we had ministered and showed the *Jesus* film the previous night. “*That could also threaten the other airstrip!*”

It was pointed out that our evacuation flight could be in danger.

We prayed. I realised that it was my 9th wedding anniversary (and the 3rd consecutive one I had spent in Sudan far away from Lenora). It was hard to know how to celebrate it as even water was scarce.

Walking to ministry gives one energy. Walking to nowhere because of human error, or maliciousness, makes your feet feel as heavy as lead. Yet we used our delay to show the *Jesus* film to another village. Fortunately we had just enough fuel for the generator for one more showing!

Yet another 3 a.m. start to the next day walking to another airstrip rendezvous. Once there we checked the airstrip and a soldier walked over the landing area with a mine sweeper. It was a tense wait, but a couple of hours later our aircraft came roaring in at tree top level and made a bumpy landing. Goodbyes were said and we gave some of our water bottles and kit to our escorts. Then we were racing down the strip and hurtling into the sky. After so many days of walking it seemed incredible to suddenly cover so much distance so quickly. My mind was racing faster than the aircraft as I pulled out my writing pad and began to plan the follow up projects to this our thirtieth mission into Sudan.

## **Prayer, Praise and Planning**

There was also time for sombre reflection. The severe sufferings of Christians in the Nuba put our (often trivial) complaints and problems into perspective. There was much praise for God's protection and answered prayers.

The Lord has wonderfully guided, provided for and protected our missionaries in so many dangerous and difficult areas for 33 years. Since 1995, in Sudan alone, Frontline Fellowship has delivered over 500 000 Bibles and Christian books in 24 languages, to 23 different regions. We have also conducted over 2 000 meetings inside Sudan, including *Great Commission Seminars, Pastors Training Courses, Medical Workshops, Biblical Worldview Seminars, God and Government Seminars* and *Reformation and Revival Seminars*. We have also restored, or established, three clinics, delivered tonnes of medicines and delivered an ambulance.

I also thought back over the Bible studies, times of prayer and experiences that the Lord had used to lead me to minister to persecuted Christians in



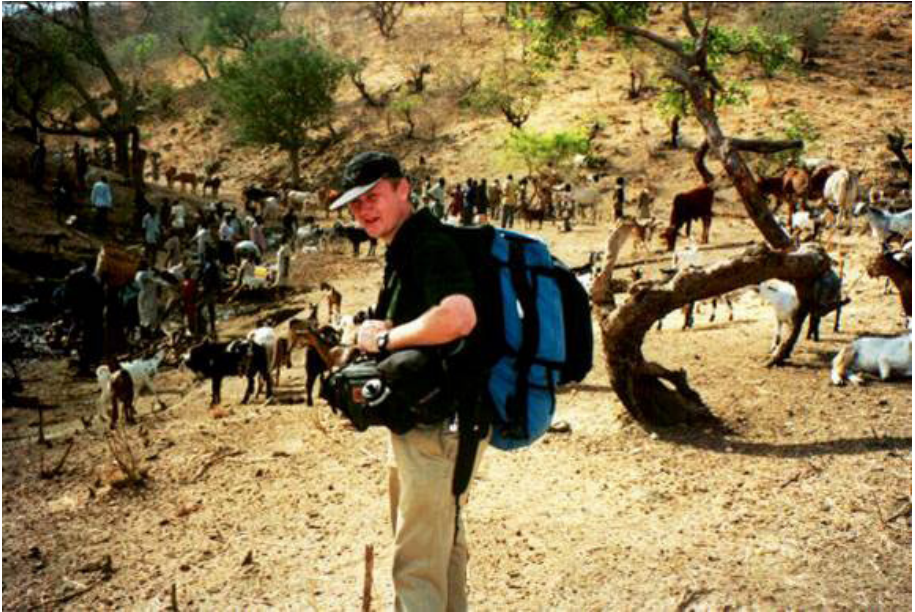
such remote parts of Sudan.

Following our Lord Jesus is an exhilarating adventure.

**Give up your small ambitions and follow Jesus!**

You never know where the adventure of discipleship will lead you - when you start **putting feet to your Faith.**

Peter Hammond



## For Further Reading:

### BOOKS THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Readers make leaders. A reading Christian is a growing Christian.  
If you want to lead then you must **read**:

By God's grace we have access to a vast resource of information, inspiration and instruction -through books. For those who may not know where to start, here are some of the most important life changing books I have read:

*What If Jesus Had Never Been Born?* -Dr. D. James Kennedy & Jerry Newcombe, Nelson, 1994.

*The Gates of Hell Shall Not Prevail* -Dr. D. James Kennedy & Jerry Newcombe, Nelson, 1996.

*Sketches From Church History* - S. M. Houghton, Banner of Truth, 1980.

*The Great Christian Revolution* -Otto Scott, Reformer Library, 1994.

*The Great Evangelical Disaster* -Francis Schaeffer.

*How Should We Then Live?*-Francis Schaeffer.

*Understanding the Times* -Dr. David Noebel, Summit Press, 1991.

*Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt Manipulators* -David Chilton.

*Idols For Destruction* - Herbert Schlossberg, Crossway Books, 1990.

*Bringing in the Sheaves* -George Grant, Reformer Library, 1995.

*Accessory To Murder* -Randall Terry, Wolgemuthand Hyatt, 1990.

*God Among the Zulus* -Kurt Koch

*War Psalms of the Prince of Peace* -James Adams, 1990.

*Pilgrims Progress* - John Bunyan, 1678

*Operation World* -Patrick Johnstone, OM Publishing, 1997.

*Last Days Madness*- Gary De Mar, American Vision, 1994.

*Institutes of the Christian Religion* -John Calvin, Westminster Press.

*The Institutes of Biblical Law* -Dr. R. J. Rushdoony, Ross House, 1973.

*Missionary Travels* -Dr. David Livingstone, Ward, Lock & Co, 1857.

*This Was John Calvin* - Theavan Halsema, Baker, 1959.

*Foxes Book of Martyrs* -John Foxe, reprinted by Whitaker, 1981.

*The Puritan Hope* -by Iain Murray, Banner of Truth

*The Safety Net Plan* - Dr. Paul Lindstrom, Christian Liberty Press, 1994.

*Hell's Best Kept Secret* - Ray Comfort, Living Waters

*The Lie - Evolution* - Ken Ham, Answers in Genesis

# Other Publications Available

## Books

Answering Skeptics \*  
Biblical Principles for Africa (Also in Afrikaans and French) \*  
Biblical Worldview Manual  
Character Assassins - Dealing with Ecclesiastical Tyrants & Terrorists \*  
Church History Manual \*  
Discipleship Handbook \*  
Discipleship Training Manual  
Faith Under Fire in Sudan (in both hard cover and soft cover) \*  
Going Through - Even if the Door is Closed  
Great Commission Manual  
Greatest Century of Missions (In both hard cover and soft cover)  
Greatest Century of Reformation (In both hard cover and soft cover)  
Holocaust in Rwanda (also available in French)  
In the Killing Fields of Mozambique  
Make a Difference - A Christian Action Handbook for Southern Africa  
Pink Agenda - Sexual Revolution and the Ruin of the Family \*  
Pornemic - How the Pornography Plague Affects You \*  
Practical Discipleship \*  
Reforming our Families \*  
Security and Survival in Unstable Times  
Slavery, Terrorism and Islam - The Historical Roots and Contemporary Threat \*  
South Africa - Renaissance or Reformation? \*  
The Apostles Creed - Firm Foundations for your Faith \*  
The Authority of Christ and the First Day Sabbath \*  
The Christian at War (also in Afrikaans, German and Spanish)  
The Ten Commandments – God's Perfect Law of Liberty \*  
Victorious Christians Who Changed the World \*

## DVDs

Behind Enemy Lines for Christ (107 min)  
Sudan the Hidden Holocaust (55 min)  
Terrorism and Persecution - Understanding Islamic Jihad (55 min)  
Evangelising in the War Zones (35 min)

## AUDIO MP3s

Answering Skeptics  
Biblical Worldview Summit  
Church History Overview  
Great Commission Course  
Heroes of the Faith  
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\* Also available as an E-book



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## About the Author

Dr. Peter Hammond is a Missionary who has pioneered evangelistic outreaches in the war zones of Mozambique, Angola and Sudan. Often travelling by off road motorbike, Dr. Hammond has travelled hundreds of thousands of kilometres to deliver Bibles to persecuted Christians in Africa and Eastern Europe. In the course of his missionary activities Peter has been ambushed, come under aerial and artillery bombardments, been stabbed, shot at, beaten by mobs, arrested and imprisoned. On some missions he has flown far behind enemy lines to the beleaguered Nuba Mountains in Sudan with tonnes of Bibles, books and relief aid. He has then walked throughout the war devastated Nuba Mountains showing the *Jesus* film in Arabic, proclaiming the Gospel, training pastors and evading enemy patrols.

Rev. Peter Hammond is the Founder and Director of Frontline Fellowship the Chairman of Africa Christian Action and of The Reformation Society. He is the author of *Victorious Christians - Who Changed the World*, *Answering Skeptics*, *Practical Discipleship*, *Faith in Action*, *Faith Under Fire in Sudan*, *Holocaust in Rwanda*, *the Great Commission Manual*, *Putting Feet to Your Faith*, *In the Killing Fields of Mozambique*, *The Greatest Century of Missions*, *Slavery, Terrorism and Islam*, *The Greatest Century of Reformation* and *The Power of Prayer Handbook*. He has co-authored or contributed to: *Fight for Life*, *Make a Difference*, *The Pink Agenda* and *South Africa - Renaissance or Reformation?* He is also the Editor of both *Frontline Fellowship News* and *Christian Action Magazine* and Contributing Editor of *JOY! Magazine*.

For over 33 years, Peter has been dedicated to assisting persecuted Christians and to working for Reformation and Revival in Africa. Peter has developed the Biblical Worldview Seminar and Great Commission Course to mobilise Christians to comprehensively apply the Lordship of Christ to all areas of life and to effectively fulfil the Great Commission.

Peter was born in Cape Town (in 1960) and brought up in Bulawayo (in what was then war torn Rhodesia - now Zimbabwe). He was converted to Christ in 1977, worked in Scripture Union and Hospital Christian Fellowship, served in the South African Defence Force and studied at Baptist Theological College, Cape Town. He earned a Doctorate in Missiology and has been Awarded an Honourary Doctorate in Divinity. Peter is married to Lenora (whose missionary parents Rev. Bill and Harriett Bathman, have pioneered missionary work into Eastern Europe for over 60 years). Peter and Lenora have been blessed with four children: Andrea, Daniela, Christopher and Calvin.

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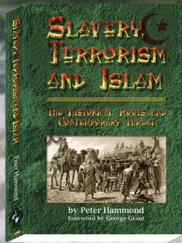
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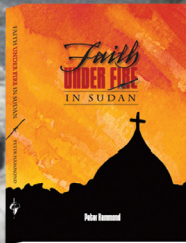


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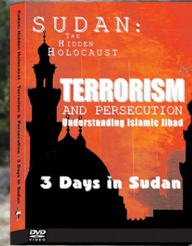
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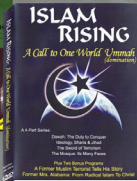
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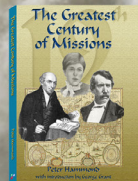
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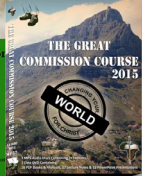
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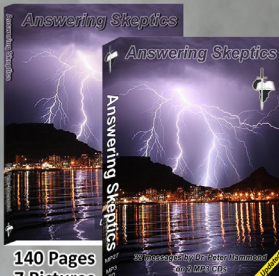


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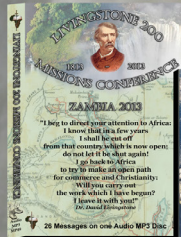
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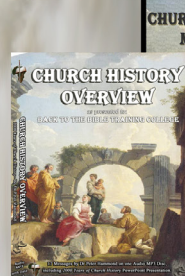


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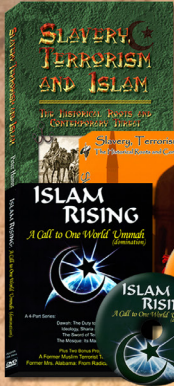
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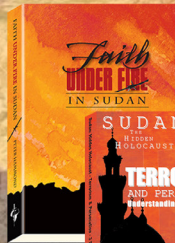
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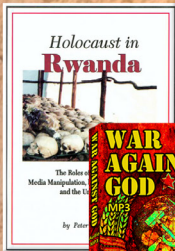
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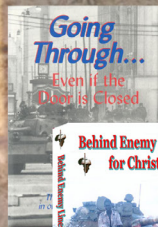
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