

Wednesday 1 December 2010

Focus on 16 Days of Activism Against Violence in families: 25 Nov - 10 Dec 2010

Indoctrination can take on different forms, verbally and emotionally. Examples of **verbal indoctrination** are: —*Intimidation*: Implying that your failure to comply with all demands or to adopt all the abuser's attitudes or beliefs will result in severe consequences. —*Indoctrination*: Repeatedly implanting messages contrary to your presently held values or beliefs. —*Discrediting*: Belittling you, your 'outside' family and friends who disagree with the abuser. —*Degrading*: Engaging in name-calling, insults, ridicule, and humiliation, and —*Labelling*: Claiming that your thoughts are childish, stupid, or crazy (**Ps.35:20**). *Pray for yourself or someone you know as you recognise some of these patterns in their or your own behaviour. Ask for the Holy Spirit to reveal to all who are guilty of indoctrination the heart of the heavenly Father, to convince them of His love, so they would want to turn away from these ways and make restitution with those they persecute.*

Focus on health: World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day, observed on 1 December each year, is an important opportunity when governments, national AIDS programs, faith organisations, community organisations and individuals around the world draw attention to the global AIDS epidemic and emphasise the critical need for universal access to essential care. Christian organisations have a special responsibility towards people living with, or affected by HIV, or those who are vulnerable to infection. Website: <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/hiv/avids/world-aids-day/> Continue to pray for Christians to become involved in helping HIV/AIDS victims in South Africa, especially through starting children's homes for children left destitute due to HIV/AIDS. Every newly established home, where AIDS orphans are being taken care of, will make a huge difference in the lives of the children involved. Pray that Christians will not feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the problem, but that they intervene in practical ways, as the Lord guides them.

Thursday 2 December 2010

Focus on 16 Days of Activism Against Violence in families: 25 Nov - 10 Dec 2010

Indoctrination can take on different forms, verbally and emotionally. Examples of **emotional indoctrination** are: — *Isolation*: Depriving you of all outside sources of emotional and social support. — *Induced exhaustion*: Keeping you up late, interrupting your sleep, causing sleep deprivation, wearing you down physically or emotionally. — *Excessive compliance*: Militantly enforcing trivial demands. — *Ignoring*: Withdrawing emotional support but later denying the withdrawal. — *Forgetting*: Intentionally failing to keep promises and agreements. — *Exploiting*: Using you or someone close to you for selfish interests or gain (**Ps.143:3-4**). *Pray for yourself or someone you know as you recognise some of these patterns in their or your own behaviour. Cry out to the Lord on behalf of those who abuse others in any of these ways, to have a revelation of what they are doing, and of how much different the heart of God's love is towards them. Ask for godly sorrow as they turn their hearts to God and put right what they have done wrong.*

Focus on Israel: Focus on Hanukkah

Hanukkah (meaning 'dedication') is a feast Jesus celebrated (**John 10:20**) and falls on 29 December this year. It commemorates the victory of a handful of Israelites over the Greek empire occupying Israel in early history. Jews were forced to abandon their faith and burn the *Torah* (5 Books of Moses). A pig was slaughtered in the Temple and a statue of the Greek god Zeus was erected there, desecrating it. A small band of men stood firm in their faith (167 BC) and launched a counter-attack. Three years later the Temple was cleaned and rededicated. This feast is still celebrated. Pray for Jewish people worldwide that God, through His Spirit, will reveal His Son Jesus, Light of the world, who came as Servant and will return as King. *Christian Friends of Israel*. Tel./fax: 012 361 1437. Website: <http://www.cfjerusalem.org/> or e-mail: allwiese@lantic.net

Friday 3 December 2010

How do I check myself for abusive behaviour?

Grievous words attack a person's identity – e.g. to yell at them, call them names, insult them, constantly reminding them of bad things in their past, and how they will never amount to anything good. Gracious words heal and rather address a person's actions (not the person); try to discuss a matter with them (without yelling), encourage them (without name-calling), compliment them (no insults) and tell them what the future holds for them in the eyes of the Lord (**Jer.29:11**). *Check yourself today as you pray about each one of these instances. Ask the Lord to forgive you, and where necessary, ask forgiveness of someone else you may have wronged without realising it. Do not forget to make restitution, especially with your children.*

The 16 Days of Activism Against Violence in families: 25 November – 10 December 2010

Physical abuse is becoming more and more common in our society. Children who grow up in violent homes or cultures, experience deep humiliation during childhood and may become frustrated adults in social relationships or their work environment. Such people will normally attack a family member. This behaviour is more often than not accompanied by alcohol abuse. Many times there is great remorse afterwards, but in some people it is simply sadistic behaviour. *Pray for wisdom for people who are victims of physical abuse, especially for those you know. Pray for practical ways to protect themselves and their family members. Pray for the abusive person to come to terms with him/herself, to understand God's unconditional love and that the Holy Spirit will help him/her to deal with frustration, humiliation and personal emotional pain from the past. Pray that such people will be willing to go for professional help in cases where it is necessary. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work self-control in the person's heart and the willingness to acknowledge their problem and to deal with the causes of it.*

Saturday 4 December 2010

The 16 Days of Activism Against Violence in families: 25 November – 10 December 2010

Sexual abuse: Rape is sexual intercourse by threat, force or deception. Statutory rape is sexual intercourse with a female or male under the legal age of consent, with or without force. Aggravated sexual assault applies to the visible display of a weapon or the threat of death or kidnapping to anyone above statutory age. Stranger rape is forced sexual intercourse by one who is unknown to the victim. Mate rape or spousal rape is defined as forced sexual relations by a husband. More than half of rapes committed are by someone known to the victim (boyfriend, relative, co-worker, neighbour, friend or spouse). Victims of these rapes (called acquaintance rape) are the most difficult to convince to report the rape. Spend time in prayer today on each of these issues. Ask the Lord for the healing of victims, but also for the Holy Spirit to convince abusers of His purpose for their lives. Pray especially for rapes to be prevented, stopped, and rapists (countrywide and worldwide) to turn their lives and behaviour patterns over into the hand of the Lord. There are children in Orange Farms, Johannesburg, saying they had prayed and was saved from potential rape-situations. God is almighty and nothing is impossible for Him!

Focus on worldwide food security

The food storehouses of the world are reasonably full at present and prices have started falling. Climatic changes are however a given. Of all places, sub-Saharan Africa is hit hardest. Crop yields are negatively influenced by this and the availability of water is a growing concern. Website: <http://www.grainmilling.org.za> Please pray for God's revelations to those responsible for decision-making regarding solutions to develop more drought-resistant cultivars that will yield a good crop in dry conditions.

Sunday 5 December 2010

Prayer that brings breakthrough is prayer that embraces the cross, and prayer from a surrendered heart

...Yet not as I will, but as You will (**Matt.26:39**). My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may Your will be done (**Matt.26:42**). God enables us to surrender to His will at the appointed time. Surrender is about our willingness to trust God and obey Him. In love, He enables us to turn from self-reliance and completely rely on Him instead. Holy boldness is always preceded by a fresh brokenness in God's servants, in which Christ is lifted up and exalted through our adoration of Him and obedience to Him. Without Gethsemane, there could be no Golgotha; Golgotha can be described as the outward manifestation of the glory of the Lord's intercession at Gethsemane, in which Christ travailed to break through to the Cross. Likewise, there could be no Pentecost without the Cross—the Blood had to be poured out as a fountainhead of God's love at Calvary before the Spirit could be poured out at Pentecost. Every priest has an altar and every altar requires a sacrifice. The Cross is the altar upon which Christ, our High Priest, sacrificed His life once and for all for mankind, purchasing our redemption by His precious Blood. He ministers in the power of an indestructible life. The Cross must be central to our lives, for there we receive the revelation and impartation of the divine exchanges purchased by Christ's sacrifice and the enabling of the Holy Spirit to live our lives for God. Such divine exchanges include Jesus bearing our sin so that we might receive forgiveness; He was punished so that we might receive peace; He was rejected so that we might be accepted; He was made a curse so that we might enter into blessing and be restored in fellowship with God. (*Gatekeepers Global Ministries*, by Catherine Brown. Taken from notes by Catherine Brown, with some additional notes) Take a moment to prayerfully reflect on these thoughts. Pour your heart out before God and ask Him to change your heart so that you may reflect Him more and more.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Violence in families: 25 November – 10 December 2010

Substance abuse: Substance abuse often ends in physical abuse. There are five types of substance abusers: An *experimental* user (curious ones), *recreational* user (abuse substance on special occasions (parties, celebrations), a *regular* user (having a constant pattern of substance abuse, who also attempts to live a normal lifestyle), a *binge* user (uses drugs uncontrollably for a brief period of time and then abstains until the next binge), and a *dependent* user (who is emotionally and physically dependant on the substance they abuse and whose life centres around obtaining those substances) Take time to pray through each one of these types of substance abusers. Ask for God to open their eyes to recognise their condition, crying out to Him for deliverance and a new start. Pray especially for parents and family members of substance abusers, that despite years of empty promises from the abusers, to keep on praying and trusting God, for Whom nothing is impossible, to deliver the abusers from their bondage.

Monday 6 December 2010

The 16 Days of Activism Against Violence in families: 25 November – 10 December 2010

The face of verbal abuse in our actions: Abuse entails much more than just physical abuse that can be seen with the naked eye. It can be subtle or blatant, quiet or loud, smooth or abrasive (**Ps.55:21**) Spend time praying through each of these examples of **verbal abuse**, in your own life, in that of those you know, and especially over the people of South Africa. Let us repent of destructive ways in our lives and ask God's forgiveness to cover a multitude of sins in our nation. Examples: Accusations, excessive 'advice', backbiting, badgering, bashing because of gender, race or religion, belittling, betraying confidences, blame-shifting, breaking promises, bullying, complaining chronically about unjust treatment, controlling conversations, criticising unjustly, degrading, demanding false confessions, demanding that unrealistic expectations be met, demeaning family members, denying that abuse ever occurred, denying that the abuse is wrong, destroying credibility, dictating orders, disgracing, gossiping, humiliating publicly, insulting, constantly interrupting someone. Pray that people, especially parents with

their children, will treat others as human beings, worthy of respect; by listening to others, looking each other in the eyes while talking.

Focus on teen suicide

Teen suicide is becoming more common every year in South Africa. In fact only car accidents and homicide kill more young people between the ages of 15 and 24. In South Africa 9% of all teen deaths are caused by suicide. The fastest growing age group for suicide is young people under 35, specifically female suicides which peak between 15 to 19 years!

Website: <http://www.sadag.co.za/index.php/Schools/Teen-Suicide-Prevention-Week.html>

Please pray for God's protection over the lives of our young people as they enter the holiday season. Pray that someone will recognize danger signs at an early stage and will care enough to do something about it.

Tuesday 7 December 2010

The 16 Days of Activism Against Violence in families: 25 November – 10 December 2010

The face of verbal abuse in our actions: *Continue to pray about these examples of **verbal abuse**, in your own life, in that of those you know, and especially over the people of South Africa. Let us repent of these things and ask God's forgiveness to cover a multitude of sins in our nation.* Examples: laughing at abusive behaviour, lying or twisting the truth, making fun of a person's fear, making negative comparisons to others, racial slurs, minimising what is wrong, mocking, name-calling, playing verbal mind games, reality switching, ridiculing, scapegoating, shaming publicly, slandering, speaking profanity, teasing publicly about sensitive issues, teasing that hurts, terrorising, threatening, threatening suicide in order to control, twisting Scripture, secretly undermining other relationships, coarse talk, putting down people, using words as a way to deceive, violating the context of conversations, wounding with sarcasm, yelling/screaming. It is especially destructive when a person constantly behaves like this, with the result that another person is constantly victimised. God however, came to set us free.

Focus on teen suicide

There is a major link between depression and suicide. Most of the time teen depression is a passing mood. We all feel sadness, loneliness, grief and suffer disappointments at times and these are normal reactions to life's struggles. However, undiagnosed depression can lead to tragedy. Up to one third of all suicide victims had attempted suicide previously.

Website: <http://www.sadag.co.za/index.php/Schools/Teen-Suicide-Prevention-Week.html>

Please cry out to God for young people who might consider suicide today. Ask that they have a revelation of Jesus as their friend in all circumstances.

Wednesday 8 December 2010

The 16 Days of Activism Against Violence in families: 25 November – 10 December 2010

The face of non-verbal abuse in our actions: Abuse entails much more than just physical abuse. *Spend time praying through each of these examples of **non-verbal abuse**, in your own life, that of those you know, and especially over the people of South Africa. Let us today repent of these things and ask God's forgiveness to cover a multitude of sins in our nation.* Examples: Abandoning the family, mental & spiritual abuse, acting deceptively and overly suspicious, arriving late as a form of control, assaulting a person physically, being chronically irresponsible & excessively jealous, betraying family, friends, co-workers, increasing uncertainty by changing rules or expectations continually, committing adultery, damaging property, reckless driving, embezzling company money, excluding others from the group, failing to validate feelings, favouring some people, forcing an abortion, sexual perversion, looking down on others, giving excessive gifts to manipulate, sneering and condescending looks, giving unsolicited 'help' to manipulate, hanging up the phone on someone.

Focus on teen suicide

The South African Depression and Anxiety Group answers the National Toll Free Suicide Crisis Line which takes a huge number of calls from teens who are calling for themselves or on behalf of a friend. Skilled counsellors support the lines (0800 567 567) and encourage teens to get professional help, to talk to an adult they trust, to go to a doctor, or talk to a church leader.

Website: <http://www.sadag.co.za/index.php/Schools/Teen-Suicide-Prevention-Week.html>

Pray for these counsellors to each have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, and to pray for those who call in and lead them to the Lord. Pray that teens will not be disappointed by those they were referred to.

Thursday 9 December 2010

The 16 Days of Activism Against Violence in families: 25 November – 10 December 2010

The face of non-verbal abuse in our actions: *Continue to pray about these examples of **non-verbal abuse**, in your own life, in that of those you know, and especially over the people of South Africa. Let us repent of these things and ask God's forgiveness to cover a multitude of sins in our nation.* Examples: Purposely hiding things (car/house keys, money, jewellery, important documents), ignoring or interfering with another's work, interrupting another's sleep, intimidating someone physically, invading another's personal space, isolating themselves from family, killing another's pet, making insulting gestures, unwanted visits, manipulating children, monitoring another's phone calls, opening another person's mail, ostracising, over-indulging in order to control, playing cruel tricks, prohibiting another's decision-making, prohibiting of healthy friendships with others, prohibiting private conversations with others, raping, refusing to leave when asked, rejecting one's own child, slamming doors, stalking, stealing, sulking, 'pity-parties', threatening gestures, walking away with the purpose to manipulate, withdrawing emotionally, withholding deserved compliments, withholding deserved credit, withholding finances.

Focus on teen suicide

At present, people in South Africa with HIV/AIDS are up to 36 times more likely to be suicidal. Mounting poverty levels, the number of young people not finding good jobs, the escalation of drugtaking, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, recreational sex, and a host of other worries add to the problems of the current generation.

Website: <http://www.sadag.co.za/index.php/Schools/Teen-Suicide-Prevention-Week.html>

Please pray for each of these interest groups by name, asking God to send loving Christians to them to comfort and pray for them, to introduce Jesus to them as their Eternal Hope and to disciple them.

Friday 10 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

As we spend time reading, applying and obeying the Word of God, the Spirit of Truth Who is also the Spirit of Jesus, increasingly reveals Jesus to us (Anne Graham Lotz, Bible teacher and founder of *Angel Ministries*).

Believe God's Word and power more than you believe your own feelings and experiences (Samuel Rutherford [c. 1600-1661], Scottish Presbyterian Minister.)

Testimony of God at work: Human trafficking – a story of hope

During May 2010 the SA police raided a warehouse where they suspected victims of human trafficking were being held. "The city's Vice Squad has rescued five teenage girls believed to be the victims of a suspected human trafficking ring operating from a small warehouse in Parow. The squad, acting on a tip-off, entered the warehouse last night and found them huddled together in a corner, clutching their possessions. Old mattresses were scattered across a cement floor, bedclothes tossed over them. One of the young women had a miscarriage the previous week, but had not received any medical attention.

They had been lured to Cape Town from towns like Prieska in the Northern Cape after being offered good jobs and salaries. They claimed that they were fed only dry bread slices in the morning, with baked beans for supper. They said they had been held captive, some of them for four months." "Some of us have not seen money since we got here in January." The Vice Squad uncovered a similar operation in Table View a month before this one. Here, women from Mozambique and Zimbabwe were allegedly being trafficked. These teenage girls were not yet being prostituted, which means that they have a whole new chance at life without the baggage of sexual slavery! *Youth with a Mission* is working with the girls so that they will get the opportunity to hear about Jesus and the true freedom found in Him! (Saskia Wishart, South African Coordinator, *Not For Sale Campaign*). *Praise God for His mercy!*

The 16 Days of Activism Against Violence in families: 25 November – 10 December 2010

Victims of abuse: Victims of abuse may experience a loss of self-worth (increased self-doubt), loss of self-confidence (increased self-consciousness), loss of self-perception (increased self-criticism), loss of happiness (increased emotional flatness), loss of self-assurance (increased anxiety), loss of a clear conscience (increased guilt or shame), loss of friendship (increased isolation), loss of faith (increased confusion), loss of hope (increased despair). *Pray about these issues in our country; for God to heal the wounded hearts of those who suffer abuse. Also ask that both victim and abuser will come to the revelation that God foreknew and also predestined them to be conformed to the likeness of His Son (Rom.8:29).*

Saturday 11 December 2010

Focus on victims of emotional and physical abuse: The way out for victims

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone (Rom.12:17-18). Pray for victims and abusers to come to an understanding of their situation from the perspective of the Lord. Pray for a willingness on both sides to face the problem (address it), to understand the source of the problem (abusers often were themselves abused or neglected), confront the problem (communicate that you have been deeply hurt by the abusive behaviour) and take responsibility for yourself (resist becoming defensive, retreating into a shell, playing the familiar "victim-martyr" role or seeking retaliation). Ask for victims of abuse to view their abusers as someone for whom Christ died, to love unconditionally (forgiving them like Jesus did on the cross) and ask God how you can pray about the situation to see a breakthrough. Pray especially for the emotional and physical safety of children, who are unable to defend themselves.

Focus on morality: Upcoming Gay parade in Cape Town

Mother City Queer Projects is a *Queer Art Party Project*, now in its 15th incarnation. Each year the main event is a huge costume party, this year with the theme *The Big Night*. Website: <http://www.sa-venues.com/events>

At publication the date for this year's gay parade is 18 December. Please call upon all Christians you know to prepare themselves for a time of prayer and fasting. Cry out for God's forgiveness, for many of these individuals to have a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ and to begin to testify to others of having their identity-make-over in Christ Jesus.

Sunday 12 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

Fasting and long hours of prayer do not build faith ... reading books about faith and men of faith and their exploits stirs in the heart a deep passion for faith, but does not build faith. The Word alone is the source of faith. (E.W. Kenyon)

Praying the Word of God (1)

Our whole life, as well as our prayer life, should be built on the Word of God. During the past few decades a major prayer awakening has been experienced worldwide. The prayer movement has been through many phases and many new things have been tried out. A decisive return to the Word or a hunger for the Word is one of the most positive things that has materialised from this. Increasingly, Christians are using the Bible again as their handbook on prayer. *To a large degree the Bible is under suspicion today. The authority of the Word is doubted and the Bible as a source of hope and authority is often rejected.* We need to speak very clearly on this matter: The Word is unchangeable and indestructible because it is the eternal Word of God. People come and go, but the Word remains unchanged. We have to continue to read the Word, pray the Word, believe in the Word, obey the Word and live the Word. A.W. Tozer said, "We are not to edit the Word." It is not for us to adapt the Word to suit us. It is not for us to determine where the Word is right or wrong and how it should actually read. John Newton said, "I will put down all apparent inconsistencies in the Bible to my own ignorance." (Quoted from *Praying with Purpose*, Bennie Mostert).

Monday 13 December 2010

Focus on God's perspective: What to pray in an abusive situation: Remember that God cares about both victim and abuser. *Ask for a deepening in your prayer life; it is the surest way to healing and wholeness. Pray for healing for yourself, but also for your abuser to be able to find healing and peace and stop his or her abuse. Give thanks to the Lord for every sign of His mercy every day (1 Thess.5:17-18).*

Focus on worldwide food security

During the food crisis of 2007/08 there were some 40 food riots worldwide. At that stage the issue was more the price of food than its availability. However, riots and political instability are detrimental to the availability of food; it makes the situation worse. Website: <http://www.grainmilling.org.za> Political leaders in most countries started reacting immediately with all kinds of help to agriculture to avoid and counteract the risk. Please pray that food supply may be proportionate worldwide. Pray in particular for breakthroughs in the supply/distribution of available food in poorer areas of the world.

Tuesday 14 December 2010

Focus on abuse

Spiritual abuse is the misuse of a position of power, leadership, or influence for selfish purposes. Abuse may arise from a doctrinal position, i.e. relating to a specific doctrine or doctrines – using that for the leader's own benefit. At other times it occurs because of legitimate personal needs of a leader that are being met by illegitimate means. Take time to pray through each one of these different types of spiritual abuse, confessing to the Lord where you realise you have also been guilty. Also pray, without condemnation, for those you realise exercise spiritual abuse. *Authoritarian:* when unconditional submission to leaders is expected. *Aversity to criticism:* when the person who disagrees becomes the problem rather than the issue being raised. *Image consciousness:* when protecting the reputation of the leaders or church is more important than truth or justice. *Perfectionism:* individual worth is determined by performance; there is no compassion for weakness or failure. *Imbalance:* when someone will try to distinguish him/herself from other groups by putting excessive emphasis on some minor point.

Focus on worldwide food security

The demand for food is increasing daily as the world population increases. However, there has been an adjustment in the type of foodstuffs people buy. For example, people now buy more grain and bread and less meat and vegetables. 'Buying down', together with the recession, greatly relieved the demand for food. (For example, you need 2 kg grain to produce 1 kg meat.) Farmers also started producing more food with the encouragement of governments who gave subsidies. The rises in food prices took the number of people living on the breadline (< US\$2 = R15 per day), from 850 million to over 1 billion.

There are still a great many people who simply have no food. Thus, there is enough food in the world, but not all have access to it.

Website: <http://www.grainmilling.org.za> Pray for breakthroughs for those people who sometimes have less than one meal a day. Also ask for God's intervention in the distribution of available food surpluses.

Prayer Story: Something is happening in Mitchell's Plain

Maureen, Rhonda & some friends in the suburb of *Lentegeur* in Mitchell's Plain have been praying faithfully for their community for more than 15 years. This year (2010) they decided to put up a *Boiler Room* at a local church in their neighbourhood for the *10 Days* of night and day prayer preceding the *Global Day of Prayer* and so increase the prayer activity in their community.

They started to invite every possible person they knew or could find to join them for the time of prayer. On the day their prayer initiative started, not one of those they invited turned up! Somewhat discouraged, they decided that the two of them would still come to the prayer room every day to pray for revival in their community, despite the way things turned out. Then suddenly something started happening and Jesus began answering their prayers in an extraordinary way they had not seen before.

A man who was ill, came in to ask for prayer. They prayed for him and within a few days he was completely healed. Then other people heard about it. Suddenly more people came to ask for prayer. Someone in desperate need of a job also came to ask for prayer. Just a few minutes after he left someone called him to offer him a job! A drug addict also asked them to pray for him. Every day they prayed for him and the third time he came, he surrendered his life to the Lord Jesus!

The two ladies continued to pray at the prayer room every day. The number of people asking for prayer continued to increase. They also earnestly prayed about drug dealers in the immediate area. That same week, the police came and arrested three of these druglords.

Some of the churches heard what was happening at the prayer room in this community. Three pastors from churches in the suburb then also came to visit the prayer room. They were so encouraged by what they saw that they each decided to start the same type of prayer room at their own congregations, crying out to the Lord for breakthroughs in their areas too! (Contact Maureen Williams at the *Mitchell's Plain Prayer Network* on cell: 082 815 0307).

How can you start a prayer room in your area?

Visit: <http://www.jwipn.com/downloads.asp> to download different resources on how to start, set up and manage a prayer room and maintain a prayer schedule.

Wednesday 15 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart ... 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 possess (Heb.4:12,14).

Testimony of God at work: Thousands of township children start praying (1)

Two and a half years ago Peter Sekhonyane, a pastor in a township which is mainly a squatter camp, started teaching children between the ages of 5 and 17 to pray. They started coming five days a week for two hours at a time. He began giving more than 3,000 children a decent meal as many had nothing to eat. Sometimes they play soccer and other kinds of sport, but the children learn the Word daily and including to pray those portions of Scripture. Sometimes they sing some of these Scriptures, at other

times they pray them and they also sometimes rap them. When there are problems in the township, the police come to him with specific prayer requests. This information is then shared with the children and they start praying. Time and again the police have come back to tell how the specific situation changed. Peter Sekhonyane, cell: 072 285 4391, e-mail: sekhonya@postnet.co.za
Pray that God's Word, proclaimed by children and teens, will cut through cold hearts of unbelief of adults and that many will be saved.

Thursday 16 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

The Scripture was written that we might know what to hope for from God. (Matthew Henry [1662-1714], British reformed theologian, missionary and ecumenical leader.)

It is less important to ask a Christian what he or she believes about the Bible than to inquire what he or she does with it. (Leslie Newbigin [1905-1998].)

Testimony of God at work: Thousands of township children start praying (2) (Cont. from 15 Dec.)

In Orange Farms alone there are now 5,400 children who get together at 18 different venues. There are currently 63 points across the country where children gather daily to learn how to pray the Word and call upon God. They pray for the salvation of their friends and parents, for the problems in the townships and for the country. In February this year there was rioting in the western part of Orange Farms. This is one of the areas where there are no child prayer centres. The children started praying for this situation and within a few days peace and order were restored. Parents become converted when the children start praying for them, marriages are saved and many of the parents find work again. There is also healing when the children pray for the sick. *Let us thank the Lord for what is happening at Orange Farms. We see the same trend all over the world. Hundreds of thousands of children are beginning to call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus, are worshipping Him and interceding.* Peter Sekhonyane, cell: 072 285 4391, e-mail: sekhonya@postnet.co.za Pray that many Christians in South Africa and across the world will follow Peter's example in teaching children to pray. Pray also for parents to teach their own children to pray. Pray that teachers, especially Sunday school teachers, will not underestimate the power of childrens' prayers and that they will teach them to pray from Scripture, for themselves and for the world.

Focus on Shiite Muslims: Ashura

From December 16 to 25, 2010, Shiite Muslims around the world will remember a bloody mass murder that took place over a thousand years ago. They will remember this by cutting themselves with knives and marching through the streets. This is our opportunity to ask for God's richest blessing upon them. Shiite Muslims number between 160-200 million around the world. One of the Christians in the Near East recently sent us this: "While focusing on Shiites the last nine years, I can track the response from Christian workers among Shiites. Six years ago, they said there weren't any Shiite believers in their areas. Three years ago there was a handful of Shiites following Christ, and now there are many, many Shiites following Him. I'm convinced that the response and openness to the gospel we see among Shiites today is because thousands of Christ-followers have prayed and fasted together during Ashura in the past. This year, may even more of us pray and fast during Ashura, and may millions more Shiites enter Jesus' sheepfold." These 10 days are key days to see God move in the lives of Shiites. *Please pray that many Christians will enter into these 10 days with prayer and fasting.*

For more info: <http://www.cryoutnow.org/videogallery/index.html>

CryOut will be sending out daily e-mail updates during these 10 days.

Sign up for regular updates at <http://www.cryoutnow.org/shiite.php>

Pray that God will have mercy on thousands of these people, especially children, that they will be saved.

Friday 17 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

The Bible without the Holy Spirit is a sundial by moonlight. (Dwight L. Moody [1837-1899], American Evangelist and founder of the Bible Institute.)

The vigour of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts. (George Müller [1805-1898], Prussian member of the *Open Brethren*.)

Prayer story: Daddy, teach me to pray

I met Solomon Buhali six years ago. At that stage he worked for the police as a clerk, but later he began mobilising prayer fulltime. He works in a rural area, KwaMahlanga, north-east of Pretoria, among the Ndebeles. Solomon started setting up 24/7 prayer watches and launched and organised numerous prayer initiatives. In this way thousands of people in his community have been mobilised to pray. At times he has mobilised a 100 or more congregations for certain prayer initiatives. On his own, he has also sometimes mobilised a month of prayer and fasting in his area, incorporating several villages and towns. A year ago Mathlatse, his seven-year-old son came to him and asked, "Daddy, you teach all the other people to pray, why don't you teach me to pray too?" Solomon told him to get a few of his friends together and "next Friday at three o'clock" he would start teaching them. When he arrived home the following Friday afternoon, very tired and secretly hoping deep in his heart that there wouldn't be any children, he saw about ten of them waiting at his door! Now every Friday afternoon these children wait for Solomon to come home. Eventually he split the children into two groups: the smaller children in one group and the teenagers in another group. There are about 15 in the smaller children's group and the teenage group are already more than 30. He has only 15 chairs in his house and two children share a chair; latecomers have to sit on the floor. If he is late, they simply wait at the gate until he arrives.

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Pray that fathers will teach their sons to pray and that many men in our communities will, like Solomon, take up the responsibility to teach children about accepting Jesus as their Saviour, having a relationship with Him; so that they will be devoted to Him throughout their lives.

Saturday 18 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

It [the Bible] outlives, outlifts, outloves, outreaches, outranks, outruns all other books. Trust it, love it, obey it, and Eternal life is yours. (A.Z. Conrad, American pastor and evangelist [on the qualities of the Bible].)

I did not go through the book. The book went through me. (A.W. Tozer [1897-1963], American pastor and writer.)

Testimony of God at work: Revival in Middle Eastern nation

Despite laws prohibiting conversion, Muslims are turning to Christ in what is being called "an amazing move of the Spirit" in a particular nation. This Middle Eastern nation implemented a new anti-conversion law that prohibited efforts to convert Muslims to another religion and gave the government the right to regulate every aspect of Christian practice. This law was a direct attack on Christians since almost all Christians in their nation are converts from Islam. The new law could make nearly all Christian churches in the country illegal. Despite this law and much resistance, 2009 was an incredible year for evangelical church growth. One source said, "We have churches that have grown 800%. Many converts come from Islam with no Christian heritage, no Christian background, no resources whatsoever, no training. But they just believe in God and His Word." Members of one specific ethnic group, living in 2000 villages, are very responsive and open to the gospel. "In every village and every town there are Christians, and in many of them churches. In one town, there are actually more churches than mosques, which is a real miracle in the Middle East." These churches are not stagnant; in many churches about 120 to 150

people are baptised every year. Often churches are packed two hours before the meeting starts. (Source: Confidential). Pray for many more churches to be planted, for God's protection and that key leaders in governments will accept Jesus as their personal Saviour.

Sunday 19 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

Little of the Word with little prayer is death to the spiritual life. Much of the Word with little prayer gives a sickly life. Much of prayer with little of the Word gives more life, but without steadfastness. A full measure of the Word and prayer each day gives a healthy and powerful life. (Andrew Murray.)

Praying the Word of God (2) (Cont. from 12 Dec.)

Our task is not to *judge* the Word, but to *obey* it. Too many people have opinions about the Word and want to judge the Word instead of submitting to the Word. The Word comes to us with God's *authority*. You choose one of only two options: you either reject the authority of the Word or you accept the authority of the Word. The Word is not dependent on our *emotions* or our intellectual understanding. The Word stands above our emotions or intellect. The sixteenth century Reformation taught us the important principle of *sola Scriptura*, which means: by Scripture alone. The Word was *inspired by the Holy Spirit* and we must believe in its infallibility. *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives, it corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right (2 Tim.3:16-17)*. Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God (2 Pet.1:21). These principles guided the church through all centuries. Do not compromise or discard any of these principles. People's opinions change, but the Word stands firm. Live the Word and pray the Word. (Quoted from *Praying with Purpose*, Bennie Mostert.) Pray that Christians will affirm and proclaim the authority of Scripture, without making any compromise, so that the following generation will be blessed by inheriting the spiritual fruits of their parents' childlike faith in God's Word.

Monday 20 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

The Bible is a faith statement. You have a choice to believe it or not. If you do not believe it, you believe something else. We know the outcome of people who trusted in the Bible in the past. The question is this: What would be the outcome of what you believe if you do not believe the Bible? (Bennie Mostert)

Testimony of God at work: How a prayer movement started in Piet Retief (Mkondo)

In March 2001 the first combined prayer meeting was held where black people and white people in Piet Retief came together to pray. The intercessors then decided to meet every Thursday evening to pray for the town. They also decided that one week they would go to a church in town and the next week to a church in the township! It is one thing to start a prayer meeting across denominational lines, but something quite different to start one across racial lines. The first evening when the prayer meeting was held in the township, the lights were on and the church was open – but there was not a single black person around! Immediately people could have taken the easy route to turn around and go home, but they knew that God was testing them! They went inside – five white people in a church in the middle of the township! They started praying and God's presence came into the little church and just took all fear away and gave them wonderful promises for the town if they were to persevere in prayer! The following week they prayed at a church in town and the week after that again in the township. One black person came to join them. Two weeks later when they arrived at the church in the township, it was locked with a chain and they had to go and pray at another church in town. Another two weeks later when they stopped in front of the church in the township, they knew that God had once again worked a miracle in

the hearts of the people – the little church was packed with black people. Every Thursday night was different – sometimes they prayed by candlelight in a small church with a dirt floor and a tin roof. Sometimes they prayed in beautiful churches with leaded windows. Some nights they were five people, some nights they were a hundred. The places and sometimes even the people were different, but there is one thing that remained the same – the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Anneke Rabe, Mpumalanga Prayer Coordinator, cell: 0832975792 or e-mail: rabe@lando.co.za

Pray that God's Spirit will continue to help Christians so that barriers between them will be demolished, that prejudice and suspicion will disappear and for them to be united in love, making a significant difference in their communities.

Tuesday 21 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

The wise man has got to know his God. That is the goal of all our Bible study! (Stephen Motyer, *Unlock The Bible*, 1990.)

You can only understand Scripture on your knees. (Maurice Zundel [1897-1975], Swiss priest, poet and theologian.)

Testimony of God at work: Muslims accept Christ (1)

Statistics show that more Muslims started believing in Christ during the past 20 years than in the preceding 1,300 years since the beginning of Islam in the seventh century. Of all Muslims that become converted, 35-50% accepts the faith because of dreams, visions and the appearance of angels. Many testify to a personal encounter with Jesus. It is a common occurrence to hear people say that “a man in white clothing” appeared to them. Millions of people in the Middle-East are reached by the gospel by means of radio stations as well as a number of TV channels. Many web pages provide information to Muslims and they also have personal conversations with people. A specific website is visited more than 600,000 times a day – that is more than 20 million times per month. Many Muslims are converted in Egypt. *El Jazeera*, 'n Muslim TV channel, already reported in 2008 that one million Muslims became Christians in Egypt. (Other sources claim the figure is higher.)

Prayer focus on Jericho Walls International Prayer Network

Thank you to all supporters who prayed for *Jericho Walls* this year and who contributed financially. Thank you to each person who helped to distribute prayer information and encouraged people to pray. We at *Jericho Walls* need wisdom for the road ahead: To know what prayer initiatives to launch, how to get more people involved in prayer, what material to develop that will help people to grow in their prayer life, and how to be part of God's plan within the bigger prayer movement. We have our yearly planning session for 2011 during the second week in January. Please pray with us that we will know God's heart on this matter.

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Wednesday 22 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

I prayed for faith, and thought that some day faith would come down and strike me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, *Now faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. (Rom.10:17)*. I had closed my Bible, and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible, and began to study, and faith has been growing ever since. (Dwight L. Moody [1837-1899], American evangelist and founder of *Bible Institute*.)

Pray for Christians to regard God's Word as their most precious possession, to read it continually, to truly believe it and to live according to it.

Testimony of God at work: Muslims accept Christ (2) (Cont. from 21 Dec.)

In 1990 there were only a few hundred Christians on the so-called Silk route (trade route for transporting silk from China to the West centuries ago), but today (2010), there are approximately 150,000 Christians, mainly from a Muslim background! (Kazak believers: from 100 to 30,000; Uighur believers: from less than 100 to approximately 1,000; Uzbek believers: from approximately 100 to about 10,000; Kyrgyzstan believers: from 20 to approximately 5,000; Tajikistan believers: less than 5 to approximately 1,000; Turkmen believers: less than 10 to approximately 500; Azeri believers: from 50 to approximately 7,000; Tartar believers: from 50 to approximately 1,000; Karakalpak believers: zero to more than 1,000.) The number of believers is increasing hand over fist. During the Iranian Revolution in 1979 there were approximately 300 evangelical Christians from a Shiite background. Today there are many Iranian preachers who believe that the current number could be as high as one million from Protestant, Catholic and other Orthodox churches. A large percentage is made up of evangelical Protestant Christians. More Iranians came to faith in Christ between 1980 and 2010 than in the previous 1,000 years. Pray that Christians using the trade route will witness about Christ to non-believers through deeds of love. Praise God who calls people from every peoplegroup, nation and language!

Thursday 23 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

This Book has the power not only to inform - but to reform and to transform lives... It is supernatural in origin, eternal in duration, divine in authorship, infallible in authority, inexhaustible in meaning, universal in readership, unique in revelation, personal in application and powerful in effect ... Come to it with awe, read it with reverence, frequently, slowly, prayerfully. (*The Gideons International [Preface to the Bible]*).

Pray that professors as well as students at theological seminaries in our country and worldwide, will teach and believe in the authority of God's Word. Pray for a spiritual breakthrough in the hearts of 'well-meaning' lecturers who increasingly ignore more sections of Scripture. Pray that students, who were convinced of God's calling on their lives when they started their studies, will not lose their conviction in the authority of God's Word.

Testimony of God at work: Muslims accept Christ (3) (Cont. from 22 Dec.)

Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. In 1965 there were approximately 2 million Christians while there are about 45 million Christians today (between 17% and 18% of the population). There are however indications that the percentage could be as high as 20%. Missiologists connect this extraordinary movement of the Holy Spirit of God directly to the exceptional extent of prayer mobilisation since 1992. The *Pray through the Window* (I, II, III and IV) initiative of 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 mobilised between 20 and 40 million Christians to pray. (Thus every second year and it is still going strong.) Since 1992, millions of Christians were mobilised by means of the initiative *30 Days of Prayer* to pray for Muslims during Ramadan, their month of fasting. These are only two of an increasing number of prayer initiatives focusing on Muslims. Website: <http://www.30-days.net/>

Praise God with the angels for every Muslim who become part of the Kingdom of God. Keep on praying that many more will come to salvation, especially children and young people.

Friday 24 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

Pay attention to the reading of the words of Scripture, in order to learn from them how to be with God. (John of Apamea [early fifth century], Syrian monk and spiritual writer.)

Lay hold on the Bible until the Bible lays hold on you. (William H. Houghton, president of the *Moody Bible Institute*, [1934-1947]).

Pray for yourself and your family today; that God's Word will be authoritative in each one's life and that practical choices and behaviour will be determined by it.

Testimony of God at work: Revival in China

When China became a communist state in 1951 there were approximately 1.5 million Christians in the country. The church worked underground for the following four decades ... and grew. But Christians were brutally persecuted. Millions died and many spent years in prison, some up to 20-30 years. In 2009 the Chinese government said there were 130 million Christians in China. Sources in the underground church in China believe this number to be closer to 150 million. At present, China is "gripped by" an amazing revival. It is impossible to know exactly what is happening in the church in China these days. Some sources claim that some 50,000 Chinese come to faith in Christ daily. This growth is taking place mainly through house churches. The church in China is still persecuted, but is growing strongly in spite of this. Missiologists say that going by numbers, China has been responsible for the biggest soul harvest the past 30 years in the history of the church in any country. This in itself gives one an idea of what is happening in China today. (*"When God comes"*, Bennie Mostert). Pray for the next generation - that they will also believe the Word of God, accept Jesus as their Saviour and that they will be devoted to Him throughout their lives. Pray for Christian parents to take up their responsibility for the spiritual wellbeing of each one of their children.

Saturday 25 December 2010

Focus on Christmas Day: His name is Jesus Christ, the Word that became flesh

Today Christians in the Western world will celebrate Christmas Day. Let us declare the plan and purpose of God the Father through His Son for every tribe, tongue, nation and people, in South Africa and the rest of the world.

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). In the Gospels the Lord Jesus is presented as the Friend of sinners, for historically he was found, first of all, moving among the people as their Friend before he became their Saviour. But do you realise that today He is still in the first place our Friend, in order that He may become our Saviour? (Watchman Nee [1903-1972], Chinese Christian leader.) The blood of Jesus can cover a multitude of sins, it seems to me. (Denis Diderot [1713-1784], French Philosopher.) Christianity is a rescue religion. It declares that God has taken the initiative in Jesus Christ to deliver us from our sins. This is the main theme of the Bible. Eighty-six years have I served Christ, and He has never done me wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me? (Polycarp [69-155] Bishop of Smyrna, burned at the stake for refusing to worship Caesar as a god.) Praise God for everyone who, amidst persecution and even death, perseveres in their faith. Pray that Christians in South Africa and worldwide will fearlessly witness for Christ, be a friend of non-believers and lead them to Christ.

Sunday 26 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

We are not to edit the Word. (A.W. Tozer)

Pray the Word (3) (Cont. from 19 Dec.)

Faith comes from hearing, reading and understanding the Word (**Rom.10:17**). Without faith, we cannot pray, because it is impossible to please God without faith (**Heb.11:6**). God confirmed His Word and His promises with an oath (**Heb.6:16-17**). He cannot be unfaithful to His Word. God reveals Himself in His Word. He shows His character to us through His Word. The promises in the Word are in line with His being and His character, to which He can never be unfaithful.

The Word of God will *stand for eternity*. Grass withers and flowers fade, but the Word remains forever (**1 Pet.1:24-25**). The Word has authority because God has authority and power. God will never break His Word, just as He will never break His covenant with day and night (**Jer.33:20**).

The Father refers to *the Son as the Word*. Before the world was created, the Word already existed (**John 1:1-3**). God bound Himself to the Word through His Son. The Word and the Lamb that was slain and who stands in the centre of the throne is one and the same Person. The authority of the written Word is in the risen, living almighty Jesus. The Word of God is *not chained*. The powers of darkness and the powerlessness of people cannot bind it (**2 Tim.2:9**). Prisons, hospitals, drug addiction, the darkest night, depression and extreme poverty cannot limit the Word of God. He who appeals to the Word, appeals to the living Christ for whom nothing is impossible. (Quoted from *Praying with Purpose*, Bennie Mostert.) Choose one of these verses and proclaim its truth over your life and the lives of others. Ask God to help you to have a childlike faith in Him and His Word, not at all doubting His mercy for your family and for the whole world.

Monday 27 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

I felt myself absolutely born again. The gates of paradise had been flung open and I had entered. There and then the whole of Scripture took on another look to me. (Martin Luther [1485-1546], German Monk, theologian and leader of the Protestant Reformation.)

There is a living God. He has spoken in the Bible. He means what he says and will do all he has promised. (James Hudson Taylor [1832-1905], English missionary to China.)

Testimony of God at work: Facts about advancing the gospel

God is busy in every country. May the information on the following countries encourage you:

- In 1900 less than 3% of Africa's population was known to be Christian. Today, 110 years later, more than 55% of all people in Africa call themselves Christians.
- In 1950 only 0.02% of the population of Ethiopia were Protestant Christians. Today 19% is Protestant (approximately 13 million) and there are more than 31,000 churches.
- In 1960 only about 5% of the population of Sudan was Christian. Today, after decades of wars and persecution, it is almost 25%. In South Sudan, approximately 70% of the population is Christian.
- Up until 1990 the inhabitants of Nepal were officially forbidden to practise any religion other than Hinduism. It was very difficult for Christians to get together and several were imprisoned. But in 1990 a revolution broke out, after which the new constitution legalised religious freedom. In the early 1980s there were more than 52 large unreached population groups. Today there are churches for all these groups (about 6,000 congregations and house churches).
- More Jews have been converted since 1967 than in all the years since AD 100 up to 1967.

Praise God for the salvation of many people across the world. Thank Him for every saved Ethiopian, Sudanese, Nepalese and loved one. Keep on praying for the salvation of specific people – write the 5 names of unsaved people in your Bible, or maybe only one or two or three, and pray for them. Do not get discouraged, it is God's will that people may be saved.

Tuesday 28 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

We are mistaken when we look at the Bible as a spiritual toolbox. We can't take things out of the Bible and make them work for us. The whole process of the spiritual life is to come before the God who is alive, who becomes present to us in his Word, and who by means of that Word creates and redeems us. We don't use Scripture; God uses Scripture to work His will in us. (Eugene H. Peterson, Presbyterian Church pastor and writer.)

Pray that people will not be selfish regarding the Bible, but they will seek God's will in Scripture - for themselves, their family and the nations. Confess and repent if you placed money, success or any selfish desire above His perfect will for you.

Testimony of God at work: Incredible church growth in India

The number of Christians in India has grown from 15 million to 75 million the past 15 years. Keep in mind that the actual growth of the church in India only started more or less 250 years ago. It took the church in India 235 years to grow to 15 million, but only 15 years to 75 million in 2010! The 270 million Dalit are part of the lowest class in the caste system in Hinduism and they are busy moving away from it. They are looking for a 'god' that will love them, treat them with respect, show them mercy and will accept them. Many of them say they find it in Christianity. Thousands of these people accept the Christian faith daily. Church leaders in India say it is not mass-conversion, but masses of people who become converted. There just aren't enough church planters, pastors, Bibles, books and training available to meet their needs. Pray that God will provide for His work to be done, also that people will be called by God to provide financially for pastors, church planters and missionaries. Pray that they will not shrink back, but will give from their hearts. Pray to God, who blesses the cheerful giver.

Wednesday 29 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

So the Bible is to help us learn how to live in the Kingdom of God, and now. It teaches us how to morph (change). It is indispensable for this task. I have never known someone leading a spiritually transformed life who had not been deeply saturated in Scripture. (John Ortberg, *The life you've always wanted*, [1997], teaching pastor at Willow Creek Church.)

How pretty are the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp, compared with the Gospels! (Jean-Jacques Rousseau [1712-1778], French philosopher and novelist, non-Christian.)

Testimony of God at work: Tribal priest comes to Christ, frees sex slaves

Sex slavery is rampant among tribal religions in Ghana. In a system commonly referred to as Trokosi, girls are given to tribal priests as payment for sins. Trokosi means wives or slaves of the gods. Recently, *Every Child Ministries (ECM)* liberated 55 slaves of the 'Thunder god'. It was a long process that started five years ago. They went to the priest's home to meet the wives and to share the gospel with them, and later also with the priest. Several members of the *ECM* team have been visiting this priest for the past five years. And, very gradually the priest has come to faith in Christ. He came to the point where he was willing and even anxious to leave his idolatry and his priesthood and come out as a believer. His conversion led to the release of the slaves. This priest also convened all 63 other priests who were under him and urged all of them to follow Christ as well. The home once used for idolatry is now an outpost for God's Word. The road hasn't been easy for the priest, but he stands firm. Some of the local chiefs have come to argue with him and try to turn him back. They are waiting to see when he gets sick and when he does, they are going to blame it on his conversion to Christ. In the meantime many of the liberated slaves have already turned to Christ.

Website: <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/14088>

Pray specifically for this tribe, for the complete deliverance of this priest and for the spiritual and physical healing of these girls.

Thursday 30 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

I am a Bible-bigot. I follow it in all things, both great and small. (John Wesley [1703-1791], English preacher and founder of Methodism; *Journal entry*, June 1766.)

Testimony of God at work: Pygmies coming to Christ

Pioneer missionaries from Kinshasa penetrated the jungle to bring the gospel to the Pygmies in the Congo in the mid-1990s. During their journey along the Congo River, they visited a tribe of six thousand Pygmies. Their young chief, Lendongo, was one of the first of the tribe to profess Jesus as Saviour. Then multitudes followed. At least 4,000 of the 6,000 Pygmies professed Christ in less than 24 months. Pygmies often use trees as their houses. They live and sleep in the trees, sometimes even tying

themselves to a branch to keep them from 'falling while asleep'! These missionaries were having an "Every Tree Crusade". One of the bigger settlements of the Pygmies is called Bosuka, meaning 'the end of the world'. After a spiritual breakthrough in Bosuka, the Pygmies put up a village with a church at its centre. This resulted in thousands of Pygmies in the area giving their lives to Christ. The work was slow at first, because the Pygmies feared the larger Bantu, and the first missionaries were both Bantu. The Pygmies' feeling of inferiority made it difficult to bring the gospel to them. One of the methods the missionaries used was to go to a clearing and leave salt on an old tree stump. (Salt is a very rare commodity for the Pygmies). Soon the Pygmies would come, ever so slowly, to snatch up the precious substance, and leave monkey meat or fish in its place. Slowly the Pygmies learned to trust the Christians. After several days, or even weeks, the missionaries would have an opportunity to say a few quick sentences in the salt-trading process. Normally it would take several encounters before they would understand the message of the gospel. When the Pygmy could eventually say the sinner's prayer, they would begin to laugh with joy. They had met with Jesus! The gospel is transforming parts of the jungle, with entire families being converted. Several hundred additional house churches were formed as a result. And the work is still growing. (Source: *Look what God is doing*, Dick Eastman, Chosen Books, 2009). Let us bow before God Almighty, who performs miracles! Praise Jesus Christ, who died so that also Pygmies may live. Pray as God leads you, for Him to finish the work He started and that these new-born Christians will go out and continue to spread the gospel.

Friday 31 December 2010

Focus: The Word of God

Jesus loves me - this I know, for the Bible tells me so. (Susan Bogart Warner [1819-1885], American novelist and hymn writer. Song: The love of Jesus.)

Explain the Scriptures by the Scriptures. (Clement of Alexandria [c.150-215], Church Father.)

Testimony of God at work: "Monsters" on a garbage dump

Addis Ababa, capital of Ethiopia, has a garbage heap where a group of children and young people live; they are labelled "monsters" by the locals. My friends and I from the *Youth with a Mission (YWAM)* centre in Herrnhut, Germany, first noticed this group of children and young people squatting in the garbage on our return from outreach. The locals informed us this group was a violent gang whose members were addicted to alcohol and drugs. Many warned us not to go to this dangerous place; one person even said, "Those people are monsters, they are covered in tattoos, sleep in the filth, eat garbage, drink poison and do not die!" The truth was heartbreaking: Our team found 25 children and young people simply struggling to survive. We learned that many people had come before us, taken photos and promised to help but never returned. That is what the "trash kids" expected of us. We knew where they got their food: the garbage. Still, we were resolved to eat with them. When we asked Brahano, the 23-year-old, self-appointed 'father' of the group what we could do to help, his answer surprised us: He wanted someone to teach them the Bible. Since February 2009, YWAM teams have been going in and out of the garbage dump. Trust has grown, but circumstances are difficult. A gang set fire to the hall where the boys slept and informed the police the children were planning a coup. As a result, some of the boys were arrested, although all have been released. We hope to teach the group how to raise chickens and continue to teach them the Bible and English. We have rented a house at the other end of the city to which the girls have come to use the showers and eat and work on sewing projects to earn money. A team has already moved to Addis Ababa with the intention of helping this group. *Youth with a Mission*.

Website: <http://www.ywam-sf.net/contact.html>

Read this passage again and ask the Lord to show you what to pray for. Remember that each of these children need to be born again. Remember God promised to complete the work He started. Pray promises in Scripture for these precious children on whom God has shown compassion. Ask God's guidance whether you should continue to pray for these children.