The ZEAL

Vol. M001 No 1.

PROMOTING REVIVAL AND MISSIONS

₦70

A Backsliding Church in a DYING SOCIETY

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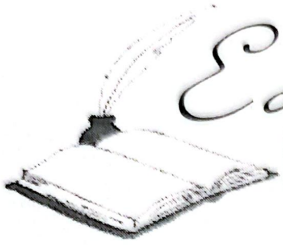

HALLELUIAH!
"THE ZEAL" IS BACK!!

When I first published a 4- page news bulletin known as "The Zeal" in December 1993, it was to meet a request from a friend. But before "The Zeal" took a forced break in 1997, it had become a hard -sought after magazine with proven impact at home and abroad. And the testimonies revealed that both believers and unbelievers alike have touched God through it. The prayer and encouragement issuing on its behalf, form part of my great priviledges in ministry.

Of course, you knew the Devil struck -intents to destroy both the magazine and my life!. But the Lord prevailed No! we won't take up his name. We will rather tear his mask, and his kingdom apart in Jesus Mighty Name. Amen

August the 25th 2002 marked the revival of " The Zeal", as we celebrated" our heavenly father's great deliverance over the life of Inno-Praise" at our regional office in Enugu: JESUS REIGNS. The desire and the cry on Every ones lips were give us "THE ZEAL"

The lord Jesus heard our prayers. Halleluia.

We present to you here, and now, is a mixture of the old and the new -a very powerful Blend to prepare you for a ZEALOUS END OF THE AGE PUBLICATIONS.

Let us all arise to keep the zeal aflame forever.

PASS IT ON.

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COVER CHOICE

Still struggling for relevance and recorgnition the Nigeria church neither barks nor bites even in the face of corruption, ineptitude spiritual marginalization, and non-people oriented governance. ***INNO PRAISE*** takes the bull by the horn, and calls the church to repentance, and the nation to justice, before the hammer falls.

(8)
ARISE

Arc. A.T Okupe challenges the backslidders to run back to the waiting hands of our benevolent God and father-before the devil seals their hope in hell.

(11)
THE SECRET OF POWER

Dr. Adebiyi, himself a pastor, laments the lack of power in the church, but outlines the path to the restoration of Godliness and spiritual power: True power that changes lives for Christ permanently.

(12)
SLAVES BY CHOICE

This is a call to return back to the Old and proven path of righteousness and virtue - the path of Discipline.
This godly path to true prosperity and honour (Prov. 22:4) is the God's given key to open heavens.

(17)
MISSIONS REPORT

This is a direct and sincere call to you to review your priorities and reverse your greed, so that you will have eternal rewards in heaven, even at the close of the age.

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"THE ZEAL ISSN: 1117-7659

The Zeal is published to serve as an instrument to promote revival and Missions. We believe that only a revived Church can send out missionaries. And God's charge to us is to 'present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (Col.1:28)" All articles in this magazine are copyright protected, and may only be reproduced with due acknowledgement and permission of PRAISE PUBLICATIONS.

TERMS OF ISSUES

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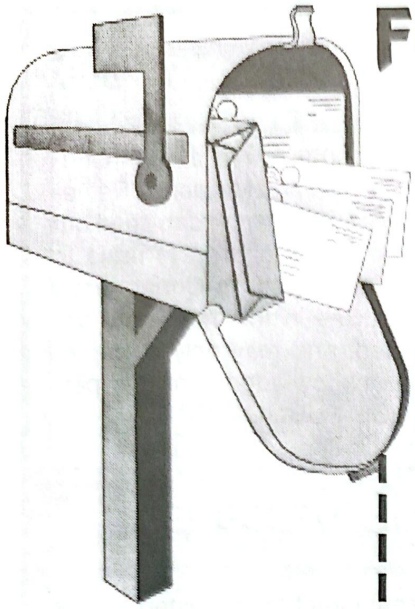

FROM YOU TO US

Dear Sir,
I thank God for the magazine as it is a blessing to me; and my prayer is for God to continue to use the magazine to reach the unreached.

Bro. Idowu S.
Ikeja, Lagos.

Dear Inno Praise,
Greetings in the precious name of Yeshua Ha Mashischi. Thank you for the copy of "ZEAL" magazine that you sent. May the Lord use it mightily throughout Nigeria to bring His word to the unreached people of your country and even wider afield.
We do pray much for your country in its hour of distress but as you so rightly say, God is in control.We do pray that you can also widely distribute the CFI material, to increase the prayer cover for His people Israel and bring a blessing to those who stand with her.

R. Valentine
C.F.I. Jerusalem.

Dear Inno-Praise,
Rejoice for Jesus Cares! The Lord is committed to the welfare of man in time and in eternity. And in line with this, He has, by way of "The Zeal" lighted a candle (Reading through Vol. 3: No 1 1996 of this seasoned publication has exceedingly proved this). You must therefore feed the flame. Don't lose the vision of Christ. As to how and success, just think of how, even from the Patmos Island, "Revelation" became a reality-not just revealed, but written and read. God is wonderful!. And that was John.
Yours is no smaller calling.
I promise my support to the growth of "The Zeal" - I shall be praying.

IGadi U.N.N.

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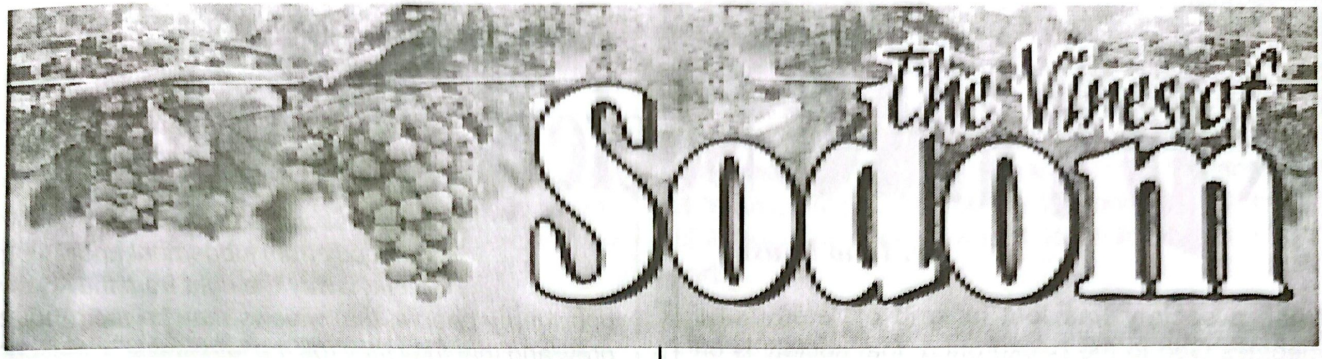

The Vines of Sodom

Embedded in every modern city or society, is its seed of destruction. And the plains of Jordan and the cities of Sodom" Present a vivid illustration for all who have understanding, to discern the direction in which our cities are heading-towards anarchy and collapse.

"The Vines of Sodom" speak of gross immorality; corruption;and wickedness. It also speaks of inept worldliness and stubborn disobedience. It speaks of carnality and great love for material possessions. Obviously, it speaks of selfishness and greed:

"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan that it was well watered every where---. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east: and they seperated themselve the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the Land of Canaan, and lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. BUT THE MEN OF SODOM WERE WICKED AND SINNERS BEFORE THE LORD EXCEEDINGLY ."(Emphasis mine). Gen. 13:10-13.

BY BRO. INNO-PRAISE

Yet the land was good and "the plain was well watered everywhere even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. (But that was before the Lord destoryed Sodom and Gomorrah").

"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded: But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brim-stone from heaven, and destoryed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:28-30.

Obviously, God was not against these human activities, but underneath those geniune endeavours laid a flurry of gross evils and human depravity upon which the fire of Divine judgement burned. And still burns today, wherever such acts of profanities are freely practiced in any society or community of people.

The situation in some parts of Nigeria such as Kaduna where teenagers are initiated into cults that employ human sacrifices; and primary school pupils were taught to lure their fellow Kids for fetish offerings. speaks nothing short of "the Vines of Sodom" Lagos itself, is like a land that eats it's inhabitants. And though these cities are not yet razed down, never theless, the anger of God burns exceedingly see Matt.11:23-24.

The 3- facet attacks on the Church and the Nation of Nigeria today are: immorality; greed, and stubborn disobedience - leading to idolatory. **While the Church is disobedient to the word of God, the nation is hardened against the voice of reason.** Like the Pharaoh of Egpyt in the time of Moses,the powers that rule Nigeria, do not seem to realise that Nigeria is destroyed" Exo.10:7.

Whenever I travel the lenght and breadth of Nigeria: whenever I enter a Church to worship, I see Brother Lot. I also see Lot's wife and her daughters - both the married and the unmarried. But I also beheld Sodom!

Brother Lot symbolises the Church, the beacon of hope for the nation of Nigeria. Lot's wife represents the "Church-family" - the various interests that are now married to the Church of Jesus christ. While Lot's daughters stand for the fruits of the modern Church , or twentieth century Christianity. These, though the product of the Church ,are so married/wedded to the world and sin that it is difficult to seperate the wheat from the chaff. Even warning of imminent rapture sounds " as one that mocked unto them" Gen.19:14. ***Their desires are not to the LORD***. They are constantly plotting how to bring the Church to the level of the world, so that they might "feel like other men".

Sodom here may stand for Nigeria - A land richly endowed with

Continued on page 14

A DYING Society

By: Inno Praise

When a society has lost its grip of reality, and relegates God to the background, that society is on the verge of collapse.

When the youth, the workforce of any nation is idle and frustrated anarchy is imminent. When the general mass of society cannot afford the basic things of life even in the face of reckless betrayals and squandermania by the ruling class - insecurity abounds. When the leadership of any nation is corrupt and purposeless, even inhumane in some of their actions:- that nation cannot last (Isa. 33').

If the unity of any nation is threatened by intolerance and abuse of priviledges, and excessive religious bigotry the end is near. When the leadership of any nation is arrogant and unaccountable even casting aspersions on the institution of the Church:- that nation is heading for trouble; Isa. 26:10

> *"Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD".*

If hope is dim, and the instrument of governance insensitive and ungodly:- the foundation of that society is not secure. When men move about mournfully, children are hungry, and women are harrased and cheated, - then that society is dying.

When money, cheap and easy money hold sway at every strata of society, and human relations and family values are sacrificed on the altar of transient pleasures of life; - such society is sick, very sick.

When life is cheap, and society cares little for the citizenry, even tolerating inhumane practices such as child-labour, child slavery, ritual killings, entrenched prostitution in institutions of higher learning, 419 and its varied atrocities, mass murder in the name of religious riots, ethnic and religious incitement by its power drunk maniacs:- the end of that society is at hand

When the priesthood is corrupt and materialistic, and men's ambitions rise higher than their piety and devotion, - the society will soon sink.

As long as sycophants and men with little morality and women of easy virtues, parade the corridors of power - the nation is derailed.

When justice is negotiable, and the law is selectively applied, - the nation groans.

> *"Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from judgement and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!"*
> *If truth is spurned, and compromise elevated; if equity is mocked and greed celebrated; if intergrity is abused and falsehood popularised; if excellence is abased, and mediocrity promoted, if hardwork is shunned, and idleness rewarded; - then that society is dying. (Isa.10:1-2)*

When the common good is mortgaged by the selfish interests of the manipulative few, and men with responsibilites assume the role of gods; when secular leadership disrespects the ordinances of the Church and abuses the priesthood at will, trouble is near.

> *"The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly. The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be beautiful. For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.*
> *The instruments also of the Churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devises to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right. (Isa. 32:4-7).*

When a society is unaccountable to God, and there is a dearth of interceeding saints, - darkness looms.

When the leadership of any nation pays lip service to God, but indulges in unbiblical practises; judgement is imminent.

"Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people. Because ye have said, we have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.

Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgement also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and

the waters shall overflow the hiding place.
And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.
From the time that it goeth forth, it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report". (Isa. 28:14-19).
As long as there is bitterness, hatred, envy and nepotism in the public service, the nation is sick.
When politicians are ungodly and deceitful, and Church leaders compromise with secular leadership for easy wealth and cheap popularity, the foundation shakes.
As long as Pastors, Evangelists and Reverends et al sell lottery cards, and permit pools betting in the Church in the name of "Trustfunds, Ecotrusts, Money Trees, Auto Cash etc. even despise their Faith for the sake of becoming instant millionaires, - the society will decay.
"Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come forever and ever; That this a rebellious people lying children, children that wil not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, see not; and to the Prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things prophesy deceits : Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us (Isa. 30: 8-11).
If undergraduates have become robbers and call-girls, harlots; and Teachers and Lecturers keep harlems and facilitate examination frauds and dublious merits; even publishing and selling other men's works compulsorily to their harpless students, then the society is near dead. The value system of such society is fraudulent, and growth and real development will remain a milestone. They will continue in a vicious. cycle of depravity, hardship, insecurity and shame until shiloh comes.
AND NIGERIA IS _____

A BACKSLIDING CHURCH

Now, "if the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do ?" (Psa. 11:3)
The scriptures also said,:
" If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselve, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways: then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."(2 Chron. 7:14).
Well have I heard some people mourn that they have prayed enough for this land without much progress. Still other affirm that they are tired of praying and will pray no further; while some chide that we have not been praying enough, or that the results are there, but we have been myopic - too short sighted, to see them. But the truth remains, that " the land is not healed. Infact, the country is dying, with all the visible sign of decay evident to every discerning heart.
In the scripture just quoted, certain phrases are noteworthy viz "shall humble themselve". "and pray" 'and seek my face', "and turn from their wicked ways.,"
The fundamental problem with the Nigeria Church is not prayer, but Repentance and The fear of God. Nigeria prays. Even prayer is used by some of her less knowledgeable leaders as a political gymick and means of shoring up waning popularity
" He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law even his prayer shall be abomination." (Prov. 28:9)".
The volume of prayers in our more recent assemblies besides those who by nature are prayer-prone, especially in Lagos, are enough to drown any mountain of principalities, and keep on edge, every ungodly and deceitful politician. But they are inately misdirected and made ineffective by the sinful lifestyle of these prayer robots. So it cannot excel.
"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me "(Psa.66:18).
I think it was Queen Victoria of Great Britain who was once quoted as saying that she"fear nothing as the prayers of John Knox of Scotland".
Oh that our corrupt and unaccountable leaders will have such a check from any of our popular Bishops and General Overseers! The nation will be better for it. Why don't you, little saint, rise up to this challenge? Make "Aso Rock " uncomfortable till it becomes God-centred and people-oriented, even striving for justice and equity!
"Hearken unto me ye stout hearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and Iwill place salvation in Zion.....Isa.46:12-13.
But we have affirmed that God won't answer, because we are proud, unrepentant and without the fear of God even as our leaders.
In prayer, many of us cannot accept some of the immature words we put across to God should they be returned to us. We seem to have become insensitive prayer kill-force intent only to kill our presumed enemies rather than convert them.

Continued on page 10.

ARISE

I will arise and go to my father

(By Arc. A .T. Okupe)

The word Arise is very important in the scriptures. It talks about a determination to do something about God's promise in your life. When God gives you a promise, He wants you to do something about it. Gen. 19:15-17 - Lot had just received a message from the Lord, but he was still sitting down. The Angel of the Lord asked him to Arise! . . .

Also in Acts 9:6 - Paul just had an encounter with God. In response to his question (What will you have me do), he was told to arisel and go into the city. And this message is designed to inspire you to arise, and go to the father; to appropriate His message in your life. Our main reference will be Luke 15:11-24 - a familiar story to many of us. It is the story of a man with two sons. (Luke 15:11-13)

The younger son, after taking his portion of blessings, journeyed into a far country and wasted his substance.

And it is this prodigal son as the Bible calls him, that will form the basis of our discussion here. We shall therefore examine this message in two parts each with three steps.

Part I (DOWNWARD MOVEMENT)

1. Journey into far country 2. Riotous living 3. Misery

Part II (UPWARD MOVEMENT)

1. Realization 2 Resolution

1. JOURNEY INTO A FAR COUNTRY (verse 13a)

The man moved away from the father, the source of blessings. He was like Cain that moved away from the presence of the Lord to the land of Nod-the land of wandering. It is apparent that this man disagreed with the principles of the father. He decided to establish his own principles, of sharing the inheritance, and moved away to enjoy his blessings without any interference from the father.

Does this depict your situation? You need to examine your ways today. What you do with your life and God!s blessings'concems God. God has established principles for the utilization of his blessings. Because the son refused to abide by the father's principles, he wasted his substance in the strange country. As a result, his life was going down and down!!, and down!!!

Until he slidded into want and desperation. The wandering away from the presence of the father, constitutes a sin before the Lord. Such wandering could be in form of injustice, or mischief, or getting your hands soiled with blood due to your refusal to preach to a sinner. The prodigal son began to be in want because of the distance from the father. -He ran into famine. Anytime that you go away from the Lord's presence, you are bound to run into famine. Famine of the right counsel, famine of health, finances, etc. When you, a believer, begin to miss fellowship you need to check yourself because you are already drifting away.

2. RIOTOUS LIVING - verse 13b

A life without plan, a life that does not put the future in mind. With such a lifestyle a lot of things happened to him.

(i) The prodigal son spent all that he had due to his wasteful expenditure and planlessness. He came to the end of himself (his resources).
He started as a rich man, but became very poor

(ii) He began to be in want. Are you in want today because you are living your life against God's direction.

(iii) As time went on, he became more and more desperate, and had to join himself to a foreign citizen,

(iv) He went into partnership with the foreigner, who really exploited him, by sending him to do things that are not convenient - feeding swine.

(v) He even had to start feeding on the husks meant for the swine.

He was no longer selective in his choice of food. Anything goes. Bring any food to a man that has wandered away from the father, he will take it. A lot of Christians today are feeding on false doctrines because they are no longer selectiVe in the choice of spiritual food ... they have wandered away from the Lord. I hope this does not describe your situation, but if it does, you need to repent now, so-that God can restore *ybu* to his balanced diet. And when he came to himself... he said v. 17a.

UPWARD MOVEMENT

1. REALIZATION

The man realized his condition. He realized that he has gone very far away from the father, the source, from whom all blessings flow.

He realized that he had wasted all his life.

He realized that all opportunities that the lather gave to him have been abused and misused.

He realized he had made a wrong investment of his life.

Dear reader, do you realize your condition before God?

If you do not realize your condition, you may not be able to do anything about it.

Have you made a wrong investment of your time, money and resources - why not make an assessment of your life right now so that the Lord can enable you to do something about it and move you to the upward path?.

This young man made an assessment of his life. The earlier you do the same the better.

Arise, dear reader, and come to full realization of your state.

Alas! even the whole nation needs to wake up! The Lord has blessed us with a land flowing with milk and honey!, even oil but we have wasted it with riotous living, and, if I may ask, how much tithe did Nigeria pay during the oil boom! Any wonder the country is so dry today! We need to realize our sinful state as a nation and repent.

2. RESOLUTION

"... I will arise. , v 18

The prodigal son resolved to amend his ways. A decision to go back to the father for restoration is always one taken in. the right direction. The repentance must always be backed with a firm decision. This man resolved for a positive change. A change towards the source. Surely, you need such a decision in your life today. Our God is ever full of compassion to welcome you back home. He will be so delighted to see you back in the fold.

You need not suffer any further, or allow the enemy to continue cheating you, when you have a father that can help you out right away!

Take a step of faith today, Arise! and come to God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Arc. Adewunmi Okupe is the Pastor of Equipping the Body of Christ, Ikeja, Lagos.

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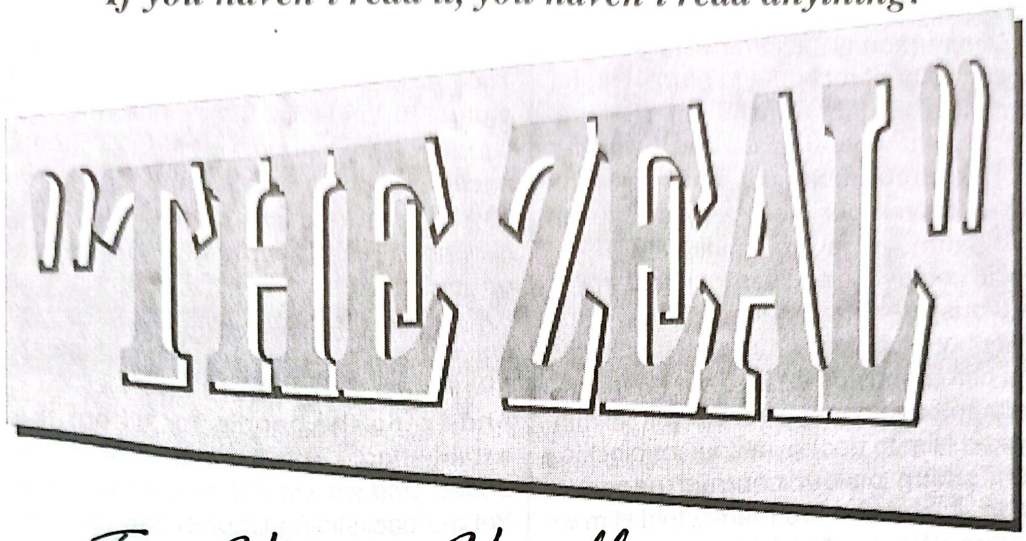

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Continued from page 7 (CHURCH)

There is nothing wrong if we seek total annihilation of evil both in our lives and in our society, but there is every wit wrong, if every perceived enemy on our way of making easy money become a target. We pray for promotion without recourse to hardwork; for wealth without diligent labour, and for spiritual progress without sufferings, denials and sacrifice. We have become proud boasters, and "mouthy orators". Even in prayer, our eloquency of speech and hasty spirit betray our lack of spirituality.

Thus, we kneel in confusion, and rise in defeat; more fearful and cautious after praying than when we first kneel to voice out our insincerity both to God and to man: for if God commands us to "love our enemies", we cannot claim to have communicated with Him, if we had just asked Him to destroy a soul for blocking our promotion;"sitting on our contract paper; or hindering our breakthrough. We merely told Him we are not believers. We are tired men and women seeking vengeance from a superior power.

But the Church cannot grow deeper and tender than her leaders; neither can society be more sensible/ Godly than the preserving "salt of the eath" in her midst. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing....Matt.5:13.

And this is the near case of the Nigerian Church. Born in power, preserved in grace, but constantly backsliding. For as the nation, so has the Church!

While the secular leadership have squandered and impoverished the people through selfishness and greed; the unbriddled Church leaders have marginialized God grace and compromised His holiness. They lighthly esteem His Word. Piety is sacrifced on the altar of pleasure, and the quest for easy wealth far out runs the commitment to Godly standards.

Money and popularity have combined to give the Devil a free ride into the Church of Christ. Loose women have taken over the front pews in the Church, and preachers have become mere entertainers and regular tax-collectors .

"Rise up,ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughter; give ear unto my speech. Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women; for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come. Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your lions". Isa 32 9-11.

Furthermore, the Lord mourns:

"Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart. My Tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they are not: there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains. For the Pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered". (Jer.12:10-11; 10 20-21).

And so do the people for whom the Church is established: *"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved". (Jer.8 20)*

Yet the backsliding Church careless. It is not bothered. She is rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that she is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked..." (Rev. 3:17).

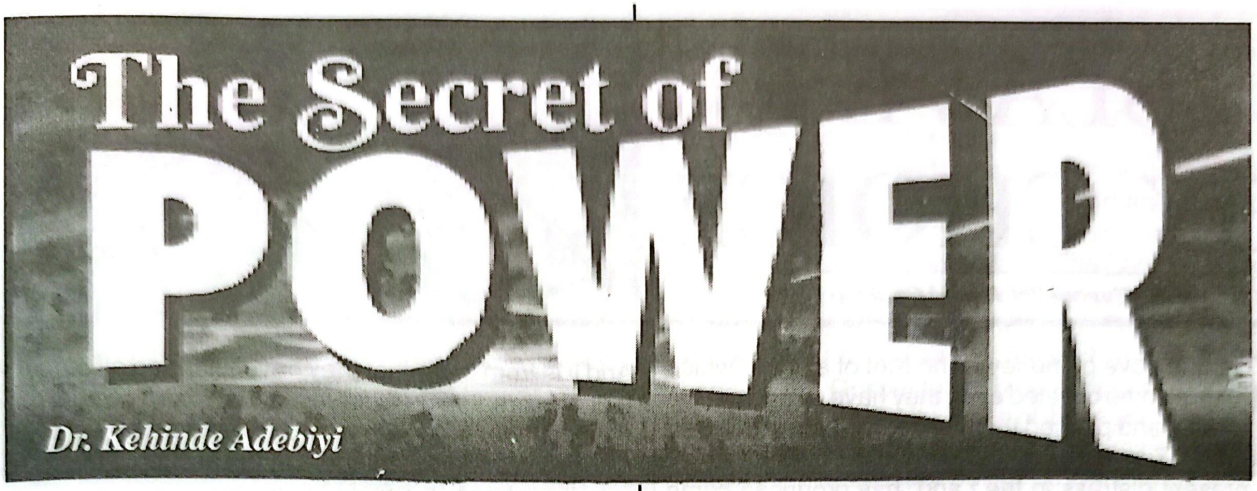
For when she competes with the society in worldiness, materialism, flesh and pleasures, how can she be the light that shineth unto a perfect day.

"Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my sprit, that they may add sin to sin that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strenghen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt.

Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion". Isa. 30:1-3.

The Church can no longer preserve the society and she is finding it increasingly difficult to advance the cause of Christ and win men to truth and righteousness as shown by recent event in the country where christianity is loosing every inch it had conquered in the past three decades of effective evangelism and bold missionary thrusts. We are at the brink of disaster and judgement, and only a God-given revival, can avert it.

Right now, both the Nigerian Church, and the Nation are in the balance and except we timely repent, seek God's face in heart-felt intercession, and turn from our wicked ways; **WE SHALL SOON HEAR A BANG!** Still Pray!!.



The world has become a place where people clamour for power. This has become the primary essence for which many people live. People want power to control other people's lives, daily events,and if possible the weather and even life and death. Men do anything to acquire wealth, and authority in order to gain power. People have had to make covenants with the lives of their children,wives and even their own in exchange for power. But where will this lead them? Nowhere but destruction. People have put their trusts in money, position and occultic powers to deliver them in their days of trouble because they are yet to appreciate the only true source of power. *"Surely men of low degree are vanity and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity. Trust not in oppression and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. God hath spoken once: twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God" Ps 61:9-11.*

God is the only true power that be, and from him alone we obtain true power. Every other power is fake. Set not your heart on riches or high degree. They are together lighter than vanity and will eventually bring a man to destruction. You can control your individual world through the power of God that is available to as many as will come to him through the Lord Jesus Christ and will utilize the power at our disposal in the kingdom of God. A life separated and dedicated to prayer and the study of the word will transform you to a power channel for God. We are living in days of intense spiritual warfare with the kingdom of darkness and believers must learn to spend time apart and alone with God to receive power. You will receive power and anointing for exploits in your closet with God through the study of the word and prayer.

The Church in our generation is yet weak because believers only want Christianity of Liberty and Pleasure.

The men and women in the scriptures who operated under heavy anointing of God were people set apart for God and given to prayers. The Bible records in II Cor.3:18- "But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." Quality time spent in God's presence will fill your life with glory and power, transforming you into the image of God from one level of glory to another. Consider the life of Moses in Ex. 34:28 "And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in moses' hand, when he came down from the mount that moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him". Moses spent fourty days and fourty nights fasting and fellowshiping with God on mount of sinai and the glory of the Lord rubbed on him. The anointing of God descended on him and he was transformed into a higher level of glory. God did lots of miracles through moses in his lifetime because he became a channel for the manifestation of the power of God. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.

How about Elijah? He was a man of the wilderness, separated to God and Living a life totally dedicated to the glory of God. He was a man given to prayer and intimate fellowship with God. He was so full of the power and glory of God that the words of his mouth could not be differentiated from messages proceeding from the very heart of God (I King 17:1). He prevented rain from falling for 3.1/2 years after which he prayed again and the heavens gave rain. At various times, he caused fire to fall from heaven (I King 18:38, II King 1:9-15).

His words were words of power. A life of pleasure could not have gotten him this level of anointing. He had to spend quality time alone with God.

Jesus, our perfect example was a man of prayer. Many times, he would withdraw from the crowd into the wilderness for all night prayer (Lk. 5:16, Matt. 14:23). He knew that this is the secret of power and anointing for exploits. Jesus was able to maintain a resident anointing on himself by a regular intimate fellowship with the Father and the glory of God was evident all through his earthly ministry.

Continued on page 14

SLAVES BY CHOICE

By Evangelist Amobi Chukwu

"For the Love of money is the root of all evil: "which while some coveted'after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows". 1 Tim. 6:10.

The present distress in the Land, has produced some strange developments; some positive and others unimaginable.

Suddenly, the only ambition of most Nigerian Youths became how to emigrate to another country: any country other than Nigeria!. Many changed their nationality in order to secure the elusive VISAS to their promised lands of U. S. and notable European countries.

Ideally, this wouldn't have provoked any interest in some of us, but for some fundamental problems it has introduced into our theology. For instance, Christians generally condemn Gambling, Pool-betting and Lotteries of all sorts. This is because christianity does not promote indolence and unaccountable wealth. The Scriptures demand that men must work with their hands so as to be responsible, and to have enough to give to the needy.

In those days of responsible Christianity in Nigeria' especially among Bible-believing christians, it would have been unimaginable for a Christian to be 'involved in gambling under whatever guise; since he will be most unwilling to get involved in anything he was not sure of its origin or purpose. Even the usual ploys of soft-drinks manufacturers to sell their drinks would create a measure of some apprehension in some Christian quarters.

But not any longer! These days, Christians do not only take part in, but sponsor and preach in favour of it. A more recent example is courtesy of the ambitions of the U.S. government to create a mini-world in New York, where every race on earth shall be represented. Don't ask me for further details; the agenda is still hidden. But beware of one world government; or the world-citizen status.

However, the current quest by even Nigerian Christians both young and old, to gamble their ways into the United States of America; for the mere pursuit of dollars and material comfort, reveals a Church that has not defined its objectives.

Ac. 17:24-28, reveals God's,desire for making us Nigerians, Africans: That we may seek Him in our perculiar environment and find Him to be all that we needed. And to show forth His praises and kindness in the riches of His glory towards 'us that believe. But many have gone a whoring unto the ungodly altars of Europe and America. And it is from there that they have imported all the errors that are threatening to snuff out the emerging light in our dark continent. The Church is in danger in the hands of these scavengers\habingers of the accursed things. But I shall not hope to exhaust this now.

Nevertheless, I shall draw your attention to the life of three notable characters in the Bible: Great men with rare opportunities and priviledges to serve God, but whose appetites for the world; the fleeting pleasures of sin; and uncertain riches, brought their walk with God to a shameful end.

LOT:

First in our List is Mr. LOT; Father Abraham's cousin. A man who had every opportunity to be great with God, but whom "the lusts of the flesh; the lusts of the eyes; and the pride of life" made him blind to the eternal treasures of Canaan. He sought the blessings of God rather than His person. He had no personal record with God, and no interest in the things of God: He never for once built an altar to God; and there was no sign that Lot ever worshipped God. "And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds; and tents". (Gen. 13:5). He preferred the glamour of earthly possessions to the solitude of Godliness.

His love for Money, riches and Materialism made him dis-respectful to the Man who took him out of bondage. He became hardened to the warnings of God that the Lands of Sodom and Gomorrah were set for destruction, His marraige with the world system, robbed him of all he ever possessed: his properties; his riches; his children; his wife; and had it not been for the intercessions of Abraham - the fiiend of God, Mr. Lot would have lost his own soul in the perdition of the wicked. He laboured for the wind. (Gen. 19:29).

But Lot will not stand alone in eternity! Even on the judgement day. What about the "rich *fool*" (Lk. 12:16-2 1) and the rich young ruler (Lk. 18:18-25) who preferred earthly glory, and uncertain riches to "eternal treasures in heaven, and a place with the Lamb"?

And moreso, what about you? Are you better than Mr. Lot? Why did you become a Christian? Was it to secure the favour of God upon your business? or to enable you get a good wife: since all the fine ladies are now in the Church? Was it not to enable you obtain an anointed handkerchief for favour to pursue your contracts? Or was

it for the olive oil you were told represents the power of heaven? Consider the end of Mr. Lot: He lost everything in one single day. (Gen. 18:15-17). And the two daughters that survived with him were so sinful that God cursed them! The rich and wealthy Lot died in a cave, without a burial ceremony! How will your own end be? Pause and ponder.

Please don't stop reading. Let us look at another character: Elimelech...

ELIMELECH was a Jew and a type of a Christian, who could not endure the trials of faith, necessary for every true blessings from God, and His promises to come to pass.

There was famine in the Land of Judah and Elimclech took his wife Naomi and his two sons, to a cursed land; the land of Moab, because he felt that there was food in Moab.

Thus, Elimelech despised his Godly heritage for more material prosperity. He preferred "the Onions of Moab to "the dews *of* Judah. And the Scripture says "not long after, the man died". And his two sons who married in this land of self-exile, or is it "slavery by choice?", lived a childless and fruitless ten years, before they also perished in Moab.

Meanwhile, Naomi, the only surviving member of the team "heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread". Ruth 1: 6. But the news did not come until her entire household had perished in Moab. And had they remained in Judah, perhaps they would have lived to see the revival of God (Ps. 112:4).

The Lord will surely visit his people who are called by His name, for He said unto Isaac' "Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of- Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee. (Gen. 26:1, 12).

Now, beloved, why are you here? Are you in the centre of God's will, or have you moved down into Moab\Egypt? Have you gone in pursuit of dollars and a little life of ease? Europe and America are not God's promised heaven. Infact, the dollars of Europe could be the Devil's ploy to drown your soul in destruction. (I Tim. 6:9, 10). Have you lost your grip on eternal life for a mere pot of Pizza? Stolen bread may look sweet for a while, but it will soon taste like gravels.

A Christian who gets rich by selling cocaine etc or through "419" might have already bought himself a one way ticket to Hell. As Elimelech, learnt, "the pleasures of sin are for a season (Heb.11:25) but the reward of faithful is eternal life and peace with God. Repent! Return both to God and to your home; for "it is time to favour Zion".

Finally, let us ponder on a Man whose departure from the faith has remained one of the most daring and rare success of the Devil in luring men unto perdition. A man who like Judas Iscariot deserted his Master at the point of need. A man who betrayed the confidence and trust reposed on him, and put his Master's joy to open reproach. That man is Demas!

DEMAS (Col. 4:14; Philem 24; 11 Tim.4:10). The story of Demas reads like a case of cursed ambition. It is pathetic as it is unfortunate. It is one of those rare successes of the "demon of Materialism".

For a man who had had the special priviledge of ministering alongside one of the most gifted and anointed apostle Paul; a man who had served as the servant of one of the "satelite" Churches of Asia Minor (The Church in Colosse); a man who had earned a worthy compliment from "the duke of service" - Paul the apostle (Philem. 24); a man well-beloved to the saints; for such a man to turn his back on the Gospel for the mere glory of worldly fame and material prosperity, is one of those gem - Master-mind of the great evil and subtility, the enemy of Men's souls called the avenger, the Devil, is known for.

What did Demas lack under Paul? Nothing!; but deception and cheap Christianity which however, had become the vogue in his days. And it was this, none the less, which held the deadly and irresistible appeals to Demas, and which finally snatched him away from that glory that will soon be revealed.

Demas, the beloved of Paul the apostle and God; a friend of the Church, and an encourager of the saints. Demas, well beloved and gifted. A preacher of righteousness; and a man with great power of endurance for the afflictions of the Gospel. A zealous man in religion; and respected. A one-time defender of the Faith; Demas turned his back on the Gospel and on Christ; and even on his faithful and diligent friend - Paul the apostle. Demas forsook them and embraced the world. Selah.

The warmth of passion, and the feel of material possessions; the caresses and lusts of the flesh; the lusts of the eyes, and that venomous fluid called "the pride of life", all combined as a rare and enticing mixture to numb, and finally kill the feelings of Love for God and thirst for reality that once existed in the. recess of Demas soul: "having loved this present (evil) world" 11 Tim. 4: 10. And so, the Devil's gain became our loss.!

How clearly demonstrated this has become in our days. How many Demases do we see everyday? Multitudes! Look at the Church ofJesus Christ in our land. Take a solemn inventory of her leaders, and see how many of them there be, that have become the modem Demases! "Wealth, women, fame and applause - the desire to perform; to keep at the game; have killed our zeal for the Truth, says one of the Pentecostal reverends". And "money and sex have separated us", was the shameful verdict of a Pentecostal Bishop and her revered husband, on the pages of secular Newspapers in Lagos, during a divorce proceedings!

The Holy altar has been broken down, and the holy seed has mingled itself with the harlots (Ezra 9:1, 2). A dark and threatening cloud now hovers over that house where once, the ascent of Praise and devotion rose to the heavens - an omnious sign that another Demas has gone to the world!

Oh, who will light our lamps?.

Cont. from page 11 (POWER)

On one occasion when Jesus withdrew himself to the mountain to pray (Lk. 9:28-36), the Bible records in verse 29 that the fashion of his contenance was altered and his rainment was white and glistering. The glory of God covered him and Moses and Elijah appeared unto him to commune with him. You can only enter into such realms of glory, power and revelations through prayer and separated intimate fellowship with God.

Why do you think God separated the levites to himself?

" And the Lord spake unto moses saying, And behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Isreal instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Isreal: therefore the Levite shall be mine:, (Numb 3:11-12

"And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of isreal" (Number 18:20), Deut 18:1-2.

God wanted men who will not entangle themselves with the affairs of this life but who will pay necessary sacrifice of prayer and fellowship to obtain power needed for service and exploits. Theirs must be lives devoted to the course and glory of God. You must be purified and holy to bear the vessels of God and be a channel for the outflow of the power and the blessings of God. God separated the tribe of levi for the service indicated in Deut 10:8-9.

"At that time the Lord separated the tribe of levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto him, and bless in his name unto this day.

Wherefore levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren, the Lord is his inheritance according as the Lord thy God promised him. (Deut10:8-9)

However there was need for separation for the levites to receive anointing to function and perform their services.

It is time to awake out of slumber, to put on the whole armour of God and fight the lord's battle with anointing and power. Trust not in any other source of power for they must all bow to the power of the greater one who dwell in us.

JESUS IS POWER!

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Facaulty of Dentisty, O.A.U, Ile-Ife.

Cont. from page 5 (SODOM)

both human and material resources, but immensely given to fury and recklessness and sin.

The true situation of things here, is best portrayed by the wonderful statement in the second chapter of 2 kings verse nineteen.
"Behold now, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my Lord sees, but the water is bad, and the Land is unfruitful".
The giant of Africa is now one of the poorest nation of the world, finding it increasingly difficult to cater for her citizens.

The Nigerian Church that was once reputed to be second only to that of the United state of America, both in spirituality, and in numerical strength, is being strangled by worldliness and deception presided over by her leaders!

Oh that there would arise in Nigeria, the likes of John Wesley; William Booth; John Knox etc; that this "wasted generation" might find hope in the efficacy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ - God's answer to man's needs!

The Vines of Sodom gives the sap of judgement: "Remember Lots Wife". Luke 17:32.

INNO PRAISE
Editor-in-Chief

RELIGION

"... they have taught their tongue to speak lies". Jer. 9:5.

Truth is like a clift. On either side is a great gulf, therefore one needs to hold tenaciously, and with caution, especially when walking on a pathway laid out by men either under God or under Satan.

The problem with man is that he lost touch with the reality much early in life, and became addicted to religion and self righteousness.

Soon after the fall men forgot about God and went their own *way*, and it has to wait until after the birth of Seth's son - Enos that men thought for the first time, of their need for God and reality; which led to the first recorded revival in the Bible. "Then began men to call upon the name of the LORD". Gen 4:26. There needed to be a revival to separate the Truth from, the chaff because -the Truth that man badly needed for his new walk has become muddled up with the poisonous venoms of the Serpent and the fallacies of fallen men under the tutelage of the Devil.

Any wonder the heart of God was grieved, that He vowed to destroy the world under man.

For "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually.

And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the ,earth, and it grieved him at His heart. And the LORD said, I wfll destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth. . ." Gen. 6:5-7.

And *so* it was that after all the tragedies of mankind-, the miseries of sin and the subjugations of the Devil, that the mercies of God finally sent a Deliverer to the sons of men "a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel".

But peace was not yet to be for man. Neither was he going to be allowed to appreciate this Divine favour, because the forces of darkness- the seed of the serpent was already there, waiting to snuff out the emerging light. Right from the revelation of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world". (John 1:29), the forces of Rome, the seed of the Serpent was there, fully established and set to wage war against the Truth and oppose all that is godly.

The powers of Rome crucified Jesus-, and its army took bribe and spread falsehood about His resurrection. (Jn 18,19, Matt. 28:11-15).

Then, when the Gentile Church was born, Rome bereaved the young Church of her fathers; burning some and feeding others to the lions. Its leaders made fun with the lives of men and disdained the peaceful death of the godly.

Rom 1:18-32

The Sins of Rome

BY: ENENMA

Romanism fashioned inconceivable falsehood against the Truth and inflicted malignant atrocities on both the souls and bodies of men who opposed her ungodly ways. She smeared the Scriptures, seeking to rob Christ of His Lordship (Gen. 3:16). And brought damnable heresies to confuse the minds of men. Even the opposition of Islam against the divine Sonship of Christ could be traced to the vagaries of Roman Catholicism in seeking to exalt a woman above her Maker and implying that God had a wife (Refer to the conversation between Wakas and Prophet Mohammed).

Yet the dragon lives on! Swallowing all in its way; and worming its way into wherever the Truth holds forth. Protestantism (Anglican et al) have fallen to her ploy and even Pentecostalism is under her grip. But she shall not prevail forever. Amen.

And now, AFRICA is under the gaze of Romanism; and Nigeria is like a rippen apple!

Romanism hungers and thirsts for the soul of Africa: sending out with malignant passion its dark cloud of deception to overshadow the sun of righteousness.

Some of these omnious signs in our midst include:

- The falacy of the doctrines of Mediatoress;
- The deception of the bleeding maid;
- The apparition of colours called the Virgin Mary which has found a ready audience in Nigeria in recent times, the confusion of the religious agenda (The *Papacy* preaches dialogue with Islam in Africa; and a common Eucharist with the Church of England condemning immorality on one hand, while commissioning the "Cathedral of hope a church for the homo-sexuals on the other-hand, even going as far as conducting Church weddings between man and a male priest in Denmark).

Also, ever since the romance of the Pentecostal hierarchy with CAN, the Church in Nigeria has lost its focus, and the body of Christ have been left "like a sheep without a shepherd".

"All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers" Jer 50:7.

The spate of ex-communications and persecutions of those who hold and affirm their sincere faith in the Lordship of Christ and the inerancy of the Holy Scriptures is an indication that "the wounded beast is healed". Rev 13:3.

Therefore, let him that readeth understand, for **THE TIME IS SHORT.**

LORD Take Away My Husband, I want to go back to my Mother"

This is is a true prayer of a woman dis-satisfied with her marriage. Our duty here, is not to apportion blame or to find fault, but to reveal the malady/aparthy in our homes - caused by lack of Christ-like love, that has weakened the testimony of the Church!. It is a tragedy that a party to the sacred institution called marriage, with its mathematical mystery of "two shall become one", is praying for the untimely death of the other party. I am very sure that even God will be embarrassed! Needless to say that this amounts to murder, for the Scripture sailh that "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer...I John 3:15. Many believers have allowed themselves to be infected by some strange spirits now parading themselves in the Church and it is our responsibility to rebuke them whenever God reveals them to us.

It is true, that the times are hard-, and more often than not, many do not find what they expected in marriage. But if we get into it in love, true love, the strength of that love should be able to carry us through every obstacle we might meet. But often times, our courage seems to fail us, and we begin to desire we never got into it in the first place. Life is not a bed of roses, they say, and it takes faith and love to learn to live together with a complete stranger, whose background and orientation might be entirely different from ours. If our primary motive in marriage is unity to advance the Kingdom of Christ (as two shall put to flight ten thousand); we will never really be discouraged by the incompatible actions andmanners of our spouses till he/she blends with the purpose of God for the union. Instead, we will constantly seek avenues to affirm each other and to motivate each other to love and to good works.

It is apparent that the frustrations of many result from the fact that most marriages these days, are contracted on the basis of convenience or sympathy, rather than Christlike love and vision. Some marry for money, prestige and material security - all of which are transient and are most prone to changet without -prior warnings. While others marry for pleasure. Sometimes we find that the comforts of today might become the delusions of tomorrow. And when this happens without a solid foundation based on Christ, the unprepared member(s) of the union might be caught up in despair and depressions thereby impeding their progress. But if the solid rock is Christ they will always come out stronger and happier, No matter how the wind might rock their boat, their anchor will still hold secure.

However, as Nigerians, we are not a people of patience and perseverance; and our faith fails us so easily. This is because both before the marriage and in the marriage proper, we never wait enough to hear God! We derive our convictions from our head and echoe our ambition to our minds, till they reflect back to us and we sing the confirmation from God. We put physical advantages first, and make little of spiritual values. And so, when the torrents of life and the floods of the avenger come the house collapses with a great fall.

Hence, what used to be a delightful company, now, becornes a derided sore. The joy disappears, the dreams fade, hope is dashed; fear, anger and irritation sets in. The societycannot help us as they make more and more demands upon us, and bring unbearable pressures on us. The Church herself may not be able to restore ' us because of her apparent lack of spiritual vigor and her compromise with the forces of the society.

Therefore, the marriage crumbles causing more problems than before, and leaving in its trail an army of the broken hearted and hurting which in return will weaken the Church further and worsen society. Soon, these betrayed people begin to source means for happiness. And they do so, not primarily to fulfil the will of God for their lives but to ease the pains and burdens of guilt arising from their past failures and unfulfilled dreams. This will produce, more ungodliness and other pursuits that will be tantamount to holy living. In this condition, the heart has no option than to seek for refuge in the confines of a proven friendship. And when this only source of hope becomes/appears impossible, the soul can go to any length to demand relieve - irrespective of the consequences. And so we have the prayer in question "LORD, TAKE AWAY MY HUSBAND, I WANT TO RETURN TO MY MOTHER."

This couldn't have been our sister's dream of marriage. And.whatever had made this beloved, loving, and lively sister so bitter as to despair even of life must be an outflow of untold agony of heart and spirit. This certainly is not the joy of the Lord and the purpose of marriage union. We are hard pressed to seek out the reasons for this, and to begin a series of teachings on the do's and don'ts of the Chrisitian home and even make recommendations on how best to run a successful Christian home. ***BUT THE LORD SAYS PRAY. PRAY FOR WE WRESTLE NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WOLRD, AGAINST SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES (Ep. 6:12)"***. The first successful attack of the enemy on humanity was against the family unit (in the garden of Eden), and he has been perfecting his strategy ever since then. Therefore, a strong family unit is the bedrock of the Church, and this can only come through prayers and intercessions. Cf. I Tim. 3:1-5, Titus 2:1-5; Eph. 5: 22-33.

For those who are being introduced to this column for the very first time, you are welcome to this entire family affair. The purpose of 'HOMEFRONT' is to create an avenue for assitance; and relevant, but brief counselling for the distressed Nigerian families. Every reader is encouraged to make a contribution. We also solicit information and requests that will help to instruct the Church and motivate the brethren to seek to build a strong and verile family unit that will form the bedrock of unit home fellowships. We expect to see strong individual Christian homes that live in love and unity, contending for the faith. Therefore, this column is for rebuke, teaching, correction and edification of the family. If you are interested, and you want to "Adopt-A-Family for Prayers", write the Editor.

WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL of MISSIONS INVOLVEMENT?

There are different levels of human existence. In the worldly context, we have the upper class, the middle class, and the lower class. Naturally, the upper class operates in the highest level, while the lower class, the lowest. Also, in the Nigerian salary scale, the highest grade level ranges from 15 and above. Such people rose to such levels either by dints of hardwork or academic qualifications or both. Whichever way, both requires hardwork and sacrifice.

In the same vein, there are different levels in missions involvement or any other operations in God's vineyard. Some of those who are in the highest levels may not have been wise by human standards or influencial or noble. They may not be wealthy men. But in the sight of God, they are great men. The levels they reached were attained by implicit obedience to God's commission, sacrifice, self-denial, humility, hard work, courage, prayer, winning victories over the devil, and many times converting whole villages to the Lord. Nations, tribal communities leaders, men in high and low places hitherto given over to wickedness, corruption, gross immorality, occultism, spirit worship, and drunkenness bow down under the preaching and life of such men. Such men like John Knox, who said,' Lord, give me Scotland or I die'; and Pa Elton who laboured in the South of Nigeria, to mention but these few.

There are those who are in the levels of financial or prayer support or both. Like Cyrus the King of Persia, God finds in them willing instruments in the building of His Kingdom with their finances. Some of them go into business to support God's work; they do not just give tithes, they turn over all profits to God's work. Such men are not often known- this is because they do not give for praise or to be recognised by men; they know that they are building high stores of wealth, honour and dignity in heaven. And for those in the level of prayer support, they meet daily and sometimes three times a week to pray for the conversion of souls and for missionaries in villages. They do this faithfully; if they are not in their place of work or ill or resting, you find them praying. Oh no, it would be foolish for them not to pray! For them, if they do not pray or give for God's work ' woe is them; they would be worth nothing in the kingdom; they would be like that servant whom after receving a talent, buried it and accused God as an austere man (Lk.19:20-21). These people may not be missionaries, but they are great men too!

Brother, sister, what is your level of involvement in God's work? If you find yourself in neither of the above, that will be too bad for your eternal state if you do not do anything NOW.

Those who have reached the above levels made sacrifices. Above all, they gave up their lives. Like the burnt offering sacrifices, their lives are consumed for the Lord. And like ashes they cannot return to their former state of life where they held everything, including their lives, for themselves. Such state of consecration makes them willing instruments in the hands of God. If we study the history of those God used, we will discover that they were men who spent themselves for the Lord. They turned themselves, their future, destiny, and their ambitions over to the Lord. It was like the story of a small boy who on thinking on what he could give that could be more than the offerings people were giving, sat inside an offering tray- and offered himself for the Lord. For example, God gave His Son, and the whole world was saved; Abraham gave his Isaac, and the nations were blessed; Moses gave up his sheep-rearing, and Israel was delivered from

Egypt; Peter gave up his fishing business, and 3000 were saved; and Paul gave up his life, and the gospel came to the Gentile nations.

But friend, what have you given? You are protecting yourself to save yourself; you are protecting your children, your future, your savings account, your comfort. "Remember Lot's wife!" is God's warning (Lk. 17:32). Also, remember that in the history of God's dealing with men, nobody has gained by saving himself; all had gained by losing themselves, and all had been enlarged by straitening themselves. Imagine if Jesus had come down from the cross when the world taunted and tempted him to save himself, what would have been the state of mankind; imagine if missionaries had not jeopardised themselves to come to Africa or if some of us had not risked our lives to go to the villages without the gospel, what would have been their eternal state?

I am afraid to say that many of us are going to become insignificant and inconsequential in heaven. The first shall be last; and the last first. Those who became first in this world by seeking the things of this world, and refused to sacrifice all for God's cause shall definitely be last. They shall be the tail. They will surely regret the way they lived and protected their lives in this world- and that will be too late!

There will be a lot of regrets in eternity; this is because, there in eternity there is no second chance, Opportunities that were lost in this world can never be recouped. We should do well to think on these things.

Brethren, we that are challenging you to surrender your lives and all that you have, did not protect ourselves. We gave our lives, and we will hazard it for God again and again. We will never take it easy with ourselves- anywhere He ask us to go we will go; any condition He wants us to live, we will live. We do not have any regrets; we would have had regrets if we never gave all to Jesus. We are not like the Pharisees who tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but not willing to lift a finger to move them (Mt. 23:4); we are not like them that preach what they do not practice. No, no, no, we are not like them! Whatever we teach, we practice. Many of us were artisans, professionals, graduates, business men, but we forsook all to labour in the fields for Christ. We may be last, but we shall surely be the first. Oh if God finds us faithful in our posts, we shall be first among men! We may be the tail now, but definitely, we shall be the head in that day.

But for you, where is your field of labour? Apostle Paul talked about reaching to the regions beyond, where are you reaching? Paul fathered many in Christ, how many have you fathered? Mary, Joana, Susana, and many others supported Jesus and his disciples with their finances (Mk. 8:2), whom are you supporting?; the Macedonian and Philipian churches supported Paul and his ministry, as a church, fellowship and group, which mission agency have you adopted for support?

Brethren, let us not save and protect ourselves, What will accord us dignity and reward in eternity is not what we attain in this world, but what we do for the Lord. Let us go for missions, and let us encourage our children to do so, Let us give willingly, lavishly, unsparingly, generously and wholeheartedly for missions; and let us pray that more mission frontiers will be expanded for Christ. When we do so, the Lord who is never an austere man will bless us.May the Lord bless you! Amen.

Festus Ndukwe is a missionary with Calvary Ministries. Presently, he lives in Lagos with his wife and three children, where he is actively involved in Mobilisation.

MISSIONS AID INTERNATIONAL

WHEN WILL THEIR LIGHT COME ?

"Deliver (him) from going down to the pit : I have found a ransom" Job. 33:24.

"For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Act.13:47.

Pictures like this remind us of God's intense desire when He sent His only Begotten son to die on the calvary cross-for you, me and them!.

But isn't it also, a reflection of the Master's heart-beat when He affirmed, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work". I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, Iam the light of the world. (Jn 4-34,9:4-5)

And later charged His disciples, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields;for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal".Jn 4:35-36.

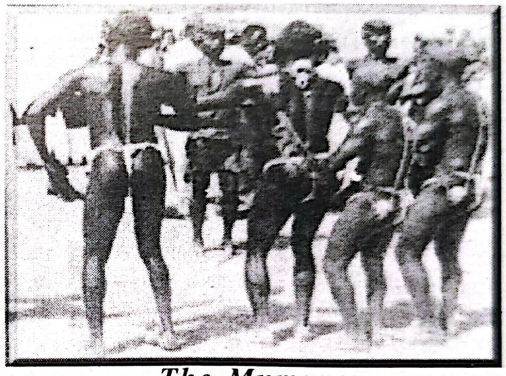
Dear, how far have you gone?.

What have you done to lighten their burdens?.

How far does your priority include them?.

"Read the passage below and act:

"If thou for bear to deliver them that are drawn unto death ,and those that are ready to be slain. If thou sayest , behold we knew it not, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works? (Prov. 24: 11-12).



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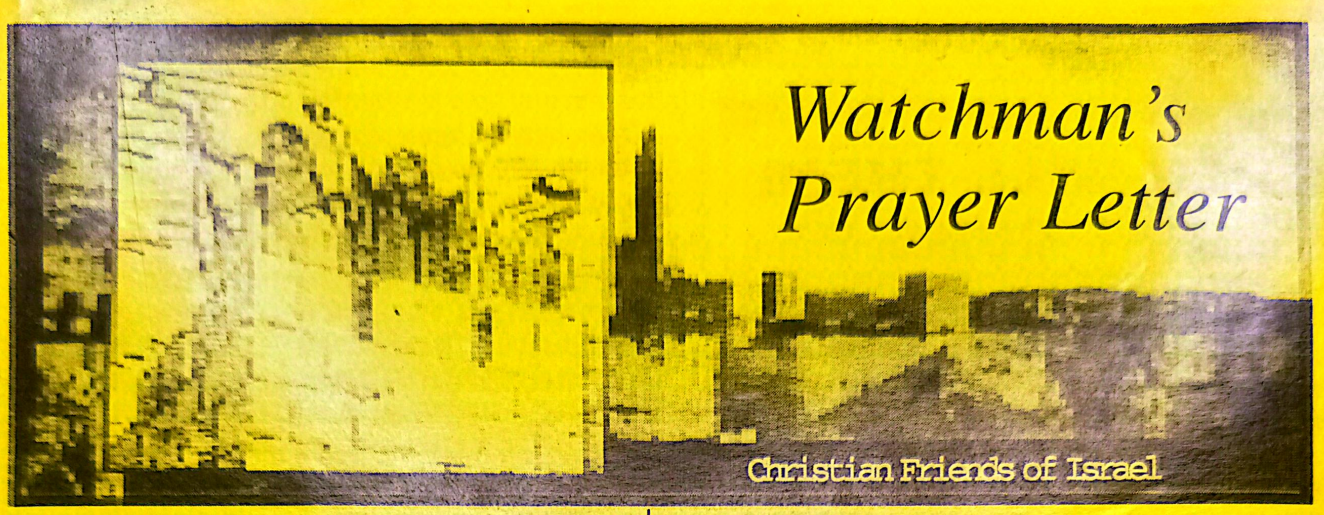

THE BATTLE FOR JERUSALEM

A Watchman blowing the shofar with sounds of alarm cannot arouse a slumbering Church. We are living in very dangerous and unpredictable days for the jewish nation. The word of God is being boldly challenged by Islam. The Jewish people are being encouraged to give up Biblical Land given to their forefathers. The holiest city on earth is beginning to tremble as it arise on the agenda as "the capital of a Palestinian state".

In spite of all this, God will keep His covenant engagements with Israel and the nations. As Watchmen around the world meet in prayer for Israel (1 Peter 4:7), we encourage all to persevere in prevailing and importunate prayer. Spiritual alertness will help us carry the battle for Israel that lies ahead.

The start of a new year always focuses our attention on time: both the past, and the future. For Israel, the months of 2002 have seen events and changes no one could have predicted a year ago. We are all aware that the months ahead will hold many difficulties and dangers, as the enemies of Israel remain implacable in their hatred and their desire to see her cease to exist as a nation. Yet God has His purposes to bring forth even in these times of turmoil.

"Today, we begin our path towards an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its captial," PLO Chairman Yassar Arafat told thousands of cheering Ramallah residents three days after the Israeli Defence Force withdrew from the city. The crowds cheered, "We give our allegiance to you." Arafat went on to say,"... at the end of the tunnel we see the minarets... the walls... the churches of Jerusalem".

As those whom He has called to be Watchmen for Israel, let us call to mind Mordechai's words to Esther at another time of great danger to the Jewish people-'who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' (Esther 4:14).

We know that God's eternal promises to the people of Israel cannot be broken. Nevertheless He desires our intercession, our heart's commitment to His purposes, in order to carry out His unfathomable, yet perfect, will for His covenant people. Like Esther, we have to be willing to pay a price. Will we be willing, at the start of this new year to "lay down our lives" as never before to come into the king's presence on behalf of His beloved Israel?

- Sharon Sanders (C.F.I) Jerusalem

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