

Africa Report and The Word

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Introduction.

A. Esther is doing a great job in Africa.

B. I am privileged to work under her direction.

C. I want to open the Scriptures with you.

1. It is hard to report on 17 years of ministry and a continent.

2. I want to zero in on one experience.

3. September of last year we met in Africa.

4. This was for the lay leadership as it is difficult to gather the full-time staff for a meeting as this.

5. As I listened to testimonies I was very grateful for what God is doing in Africa.

6. We started in Uganda only to be kicked out by Idi Amin.

7 Then we worked in Nigeria and Ghana.

8. In the last six years the work has just mushroomed.

9. Many leaders from 11 countries gathered; Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Zaire, Cameroon, Cote Divoire, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana.

10. Two new countries where we have just begun also joined us; Tanzania and Swaziland.

11. Since we returned from that meeting a Nigerian told me he's now working in Desoto to prayerfully launch a Navigator ministry there.

12. The quality of people God is raising up is also interesting.

13. University lecturers and others who want to disciple men and women.

14. One exciting thing is that two couples from neighboring countries are partnering to encourage each other and to hold each other accountable.

15. We've also had businessmen disciplined by Navigators are networking together to build up the ministry. They are helping people to make a living in poor economies so they can stay in Africa and live with dignity.

a. The Pineapple project is one such project.

- b. A pottery project is also helping people.
- c. One man was living in a cardboard box but is now using this man to help others.
- d. Men and women are committed to serving God in Africa.

16. The spiritual climate is also changing in Africa.

- a. I often saw African ministers sharing the Gospel with hotel workers and others.
- b. I heard about cooks, and cleaning ladies coming to Christ through these conversations.
- c. One girl asked me why no one has prayed with her yet.
- d. Our missionaries are from many countries and they pay a high price to minister there.
- e. One missionary had an accident that left one leg shorter than the other.
- f. Mothers are trusting God for their small children.
- g. Some deal with depression.
- h. Restarting the work in Uganda some spend the first three weeks in the floor in fear of the civil war going on around them.
- i. One man decided while on the floor that he would not quit.
- j. One man began working in Tanzania sharing that God has spoken to him about the price people have paid to launch these ministries, and he decided that whatever the cost he would pay it.
- k. He died in an accident and his trouble encouraged others to stay on to see the ministry grow. We still need another couple in Tanzania.
- l. In the days after the accident I went through a mix of emotions.

1. God gave me a Scripture to comfort me. (2 Corinthians 4:13-5:10)

i. I heard we should not doubt in the dark what we heard in the light.

ii. Paul shared how he was hard pressed on every side. He was perplexed, persecuted and struck down.

iv. Father open your word to us and help us to understand that many people don't even know about you. We do know about you and the trouble we encounter to help others know you are not sufficient to make us quit.

I. Paul gives his testimony. (2 Corinthians 4:13-5:10)

A. I believe and therefore speak.

1. God raised Jesus and will raise us also.
2. We do not lose heart.
3. We are physically wasting away but inwardly we are being renewed day by day.
4. Our home is in heaven.
5. We will not be found naked, ashamed.
6. God has given us the Spirit as a guarantee of things to come.
7. We live by faith, not by sight.
8. We will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive recompense for what he has done in the body of Christ.

B. Paul may have been meditating on Psalm 116 that talks of believing and there speaking.

1. The bottom line in ministry is faith.
2. We speak because of what we believe.
3. We cannot escape from our beliefs.
 - a. Christ is raised from the dead.
 - b. There is a heaven and a hell.
 - c. We know God will raise us up with Jesus.
 - d. Those we reach in ministry are going to be with Jesus.
 - i. How do we know this?
 - ii. We know it by faith.
 - e. Faith is being certain of what we hope for based on the word of God.

C. Our momentary troubles are temporal but the unseen is eternal.

1. How can you fix your eyes on the unseen?
2. By faith.
3. Focusing on the eternal, not the temporal.

4. I was blessed by seeing a parallel here with Hebrews 11.
 - a. The reward of faith is being with Jesus.
 - b. The result of faith is that we please God. (Hebrews 11:2)
 - i. Men of old were commended for this.
 - ii. Able was murdered for his faith.
 - iii. Enoch was translated for his faith.
 - iv. Most have been persecuted for their faith and the world was not worthy of them.
 - v. Do you want to be commended by God? (2 Corinthians 5:10)

D. Faith is the bottom line motivation for not losing heart in ministry.

1. We are not living for the here and now.
2. We often cannot make sense of our lives here in serving the Lord.
3. Our struggle is that the unseen world seems remote.
4. The accident that took my friend's life happened in about three seconds. The difference between time and eternity for him was three seconds.
5. People who were alive and committed to serving the Lord were suddenly ushered into eternity and the unseen suddenly became real.
6. What was mortal was swallowed up by life.
7. God has made us for this very purpose of being swallowed up by life.
8. I also read that week that Jesus went to prepare a place for us. (John 14)
 - a. It took God six days to prepare the world. He's been preparing a place for us for 2000 years.
 - b. When you buy a present for someone do you want to show it to them? I believe Christ wants to show us what he's prepared but there is work to do now.
 - c. I used to camp often and the tent is necessary, but when you get home having a house is better than a tent.
 - d. Soldiers in war do not want to remain on the front, but to get home.
 - e. We should be satisfied in struggling here but yearning to get home.
9. Faith motivates us to get the job done and to be with Christ.