



Truths Reconfirmed in Africa

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During a recent trip to Africa, I was once again reminded that there is a tremendous need for mankind to hear the Gospel message. It is all too easy to stay focused on the small part of the world where we live and forget about the rest of God's harvest field. My trip reconfirmed that there is a tremendous need for **PERSONNEL**, **PROTECTION**, **POWER**, **PROVISION**, and **PRAYER** in fulfilling the task of worldwide evangelization.

The need for missionary **PERSONNEL** is probably greater today than ever before. Jesus gave us one very particular prayer request for more *labourers* (Matthew 9:37–38; Luke 10:2). As I traveled through town after town and village after village in Africa, my heart was burdened about the need for more missionaries. Some towns and villages I visited now have independent Baptist churches because BIMI personnel answered God's call to "Go." However, I was also made aware of towns and villages where there is no Gospel-preaching work of any kind. Humanly speaking, the only way these places will one day have a church is when someone responds to the need for more missionaries.

Often our prayers for God's **PROTECTION** are either habitual or halfhearted because safety has not historically been an issue of great concern. However, for those serving in places like Africa, prayers for protection are passionate and continual. Prior to my leaving

for Africa, a terror alert was issued for one of the countries I was scheduled to visit. Also, as I was traveling to Africa, terrorists attacked a college in Kenya and brutally murdered nearly 150 Christians. Additionally, while I was on the continent, there were other terrorist alerts issued for places where I was staying. Many missionaries have armed guards at their homes as well as armed guards at the entrances to their church properties. Every time we went to a shopping mall, our vehicle was searched and we were often asked to get out of the vehicle so they could search us individually. This is just "normal" life for those living in much of Africa. Although we might take our safety for granted, God's protection is tremendously needed no matter where God calls us to serve Him.

Doing the Lord's work in our own strength will yield very little (if any) eternal fruit. The **POWER** of God is absolutely essential in every ministry on every field, and thus we should pray for it daily. While in Africa, I met people who walked for hours to attend church. The power of God's glorious Gospel had changed their lives. These believers did not have to be bribed or coaxed to be faithful to church services. As a result, a church is now being started (or has been started) in some of these places so Christians do not have to walk for hours and so the whole village can be more effectively reached for Christ. God has given

us the responsibility to share the Gospel, but it is only through the power of God that souls will be saved and churches will be planted.

Church planting is also completely dependent on God's **PROVISION**. One of the village churches I visited had prayed for God to provide a church building. God had recently supplied the mud and dung mixture they needed for the floor, the small trees that would function as walls and rafters, and the dried grass to be used as roofing. This small congregation gathered together while we visited with them and we enjoyed an impromptu church service in their new church building. They praised God for His provision. As I reflected on their joy, I was overwhelmed with all of God's blessings in my own life. I wondered how often God had provided things for me and I did not even think to thank Him for His provision. God will supply everything needed to accomplish His will—although what we think we need is often more than what is truly necessary. In John 15:16, Christ told us to "go." In that same verse He promises that as we go, *whatsoever we shall ask of the Father in His name, he will give it to us*.

Finally, the necessity of **PRAYER** is something that has been mentioned throughout this editorial. Prayer is essential if we are going to see more churches planted around the world. I do not want to overstate the obvious but the process of church planting starts with praying for laborers who are willing to trust God for His protection, power, and provision. After having visited Africa, I am confident that it is one of the places Jesus had in mind when He said, "*The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few*" (Luke 10:2). As all of the truths mentioned above were reconfirmed in my heart, it caused me to pray to *the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest* (Matthew 9:38). Would you pray with me for more missionary personnel? As you do so, please pray that they would continually experience God's protection, power, and provision. **w**

