RING THE BELL

The night hung like a black curtain as we walked to the evening service. You know it is dark when the only lights are the stars in heaven. We were tired, yet eager to exalt the name of Jesus once more in Kombompo, Zambia, a small town at the edge of civilization in south central Africa. We had held an afternoon time of worship, preaching, and ministry. It was scheduled to be our last service before heading home to New Life Center in Kitwe after more than a week traveling to the end of the earth, to territories we jokingly refer to as beyond the great commission.

However, the Presence of God moved mightily upon us in salvations, healings, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that their former pastor and superintendent requested we hold another meeting that night, even though they had no power for lights in their church building. We had come to encourage and hopefully inspire the believers in their new church plant. We were greeted with a joyful welcome with singing, praise, and prayer. Our hearts deeply touched by our brothers’ and sisters’ love, so we were prepared to serve and to do whatever they asked.

We were exhausted from our previous crusades and travels, but also spiritually high having witnessed the power of God in Zambesi and Kanyama to transform lives in Jesus Christ. We were literally living the book of Acts in signs and wonders as God demonstrated that Jesus is the Savior of the world. People had flocked to surrender their lives to Jesus, to be healed, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

As we came into the church two solar powered flashlights gave us some dim lighting in the otherwise pitch darkness. Immediately, I saw a woman whom we had prayed for earlier that day dance before me. She had been stooped over in much pain. Now she looked and moved like a teenager. I asked her what happened. She said I am healed and free of pain. A broad smile enveloped her face. Her look and attitude charmed me with the grace only Jesus can inspire.

People continued to enter for worship. This was remarkable because they rarely go out after dark as there are no lights and malaria mosquitoes are everywhere. We would have testimonies, singing and preaching, then go into prayer for the sick, for the lost and for those who desired to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. The service went on for several hours. You have not enjoyed church until you have gone to remote Africa, sung in the dark the glories of God, and felt the love and warmth of the Zambian people, their black faces hidden in the night, but their hearts shining with joy as they worship Jesus.

Even though my flesh groaned against this added service, my spirit soared. Yes, my mind had been geared to getting through that last afternoon service in order to rest from our rugged trip and when they asked for another time of worship I was like oh, no, I haven’t the strength in my voice or body. But, God sent us to exalt Jesus and spread the fire. We traveled thousands of miles for three weeks of ministry. I could always rest at home. So, that night I felt strong and full of His fire. More evangelists were raised up, bodies healed, people were baptized in the Spirit, but most special of all souls were saved. Many came forward weeping in repentance. They had been living a double life of saying they were Christian, going to church and doing good things. They confessed with their mouths but had not believed in their heart that Jesus is Lord. Now they came to confess their sin and place their trust in Jesus. They were gloriously born again, cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ, and reconciled to God. No longer were they under God’s wrath because of their sin, but by God’s grace they were new creations in Christ. The old sinner was gone. The new believer became alive in Christ. They knew the real hope of Jesus Christ.

Now we could go to bed and rest. We could sleep in the next morning and prepare to head home. That night I tucked myself under the covers around midnight and made certain the netting was secure all around me. Dozens of mosquitoes buzzed throughout the room. Last year I came within hours of dying after I contracted malaria and stubbornly refused to go to the hospital. By the time my daughter, Laura, threatened to call an ambulance, and I agreed to let her and Beverly, my wife, take me to the hospital it was almost too late. I spent five days in the hospital and by God’s mercy and the excellent care I received at Sand Lake Hospital in Orlando I survived. It took me several months to regain my strength, but now I was back among those pesky, deadly, carriers. Thank God I did not get bit.

The sun was rising at 5am and I was sound asleep when suddenly a loud bell began to ring, reverberating throughout the village like an earthquake. Clank, clank, clank! It continued to boom. Oh, I just wanted to sleep, but that was impossible as the ferocious noise pounded in my ears. Someone was waking up the entire village and they wanted to do their best. Well, they were. I was tempted to shout but I knew it would not stop the bell ringer. Oh Lord, I complained, just five more minutes of sleep, but the bell kept ringing louder and louder. Five more minutes Lord. Please make him stop. He continued to ring the bell with great enthusiasm.

Then the Holy Spirit said to me, I wanted you to hear this, because your sleeping in bed is like the church. It is time for Jesus to return and My church wants to sleep five more minutes, stay comfortable in bed and not sound the alarm. I want you to ring the bell, sound the alarm. Wake up! Wake up! Wake up! Jesus is coming and My church is asleep! People are not ready for My return! Ring the bell! Wake them up! Get out of bed! Sound the alarm!

Wow! I was wide-awake now. The voice of the Spirit shook me more than the bell. I knew I was to go to the nations, the church, and Israel to call people to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, be baptized in the Holy Spirit, deny self, take up their cross, and follow Jesus. I was to raise up evangelists, end time messengers, to ring the bell as I was called to Go and DO. Together we would join the thousands of other BELL RINGERS God was raising up to prepare the world for Jesus’ return.

God is looking for men and women who will become end time messengers. You believe Jesus is coming back at any moment. God has called and anointed you to tell people, “Get ready, Jesus is coming, repent and believe in Him, be baptized in the Holy Spirit, deny self, take up your cross, and follow Jesus. “ You are ready to GO anywhere, anytime, in service to Jesus, to RING THE BELL, AWAKEN PEOPLE TO GET READY, TO LIVE FOR JESUS.

God is calling forth His end time messengers as His voice to the nations, to His church and to Israel. Just as John the Baptist was the voice crying in the wilderness to prepare the way for Jesus’ first coming, God is raising up evangelists to go and awaken people to prepare for Jesus’ return.

If you are not ready for Jesus, when He comes it will be too late. Jesus will come in the twinkling of an eye. There will be no time to repent and surrender your life to Him. He came the first time to die in your place, to take your punishment for your sin, so you could have life in His Name. God’s Word says you must believe in your heart and confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord. That means we must believe He is God and Man, Who died on the cross, that His shed blood and death would cleanse us of all of our sin, and believing in Him, making Him the KING of our lives, we would be forgiven and receive the free gift of eternal life. You can open your heart to Him right now. Turn from a lifestyle of sin, living for self, in rebellion of God’s way, and turn to God, to follow Jesus and His way. Believe it in your heart and speak it out loud and you will receive the hope of a new life in Jesus Christ.

If you believe you are called and have questions about being an end time messenger, please contact Blake Lorenz at blake@encounterfl.com.

If you have just given your life to follow Jesus or have questions please contact Blake Lorenz at blake@encounterfl.com