

# THE PENTECOST

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Hello, and God bless you! This April issue of *The Pentecost* will look at the sonship of God's people and their spiritual characteristics. We will also travel to Nigeria and see God's hand at work in that country.

## Shawn Stevens

As followers of Jesus Christ we have the assurance of 1 Peter 2.9; "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;" I pray that you are blessed today and encouraged to witness of this to others.

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## SONS OF GOD AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SPIRITUAL MAN

In our last issue, we talked about the fall of man and God's remedy for the fall, or plan of salvation. We shared Jesus' words; "... 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" (John 3.3). This born-again experience recreates man into a spiritual creature. The born-again, spiritual man is also made into a son of God. The Bible tells us; " For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God," (Romans 8.14-16). This sonship is by adoption. Life is now very different for the spiritual man. Man has fellowship and communion with God restored to him and he now communicates with God through man's human spirit. The spiritual man is a son of God with communion capabilities. Through conversion, God is restoring the image of God in man.

What is the image of God which is restored through redemption? Although it may be more than this, I believe that it is primarily the moral attributes of God, reflected in

man. These are characteristics such as God's holiness (Psalm 111.9), His righteousness (Jeremiah 9.24), His goodness (Psalm 107.8), His love (1 John 4.8-9), His truthfulness (Psalm 119.151), and so on. These are attributes or qualities of God. They are also the same kinds of things which become the fruits of God's Spirit in His children. The Bible tells us; "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (Galatians 5.22-23). Love is birthed in spiritual men and they begin seeing others through Christ's eyes. For Paul, in his own experience as a spiritual man, love is a "...more excellent way." (1 Corinthians 12.31) which he knows and wants to show others. The fruit of joy blossoms in the spiritual man. Joy is different from pleasure. Pleasure can be sinful, but joy is always clean and is on a much deeper level than pleasure. It is an inner gladness. Joy comes from having peace with God and having life in your spirit. Peace is a fruit of God's Spirit and is a tranquil resting of a Christian's soul and spirit in God. It is an awareness of Jesus in you, no matter what you face. Longsuffering is that patience which endures provocation. It is a very

noticeable fruit when it is in action. Kindness is a further dimension of love. It is a graciousness towards others.

Goodness is a fruit which can be so broadly defined as anything good or right. It is doing what Jesus would do in any situation. Faithfulness is a godly loyalty which grows as it is expressed in real-life relationships. Gentleness is a special meekness in our treatment of others. It is a genuine caring for others. Self-control is a restraint of self-will in favor of doing the will of God. These are fruits of the Spirit. When they are seen in a spiritual man, I believe that they are the very image of God in him.

The born-again man is a spiritual creature and, more than that, he is a son of God. As a son of God, he takes on the moral characteristics of God, to a degree.

He has growing within him the fruits of God's Spirit.

These fruits are visible to others because they are characteristics that only show and grow when they are lived out.

Shawn Stevens

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Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1962

## THE LORD IS MOVING IN NIGERIA

Few countries of the world have known such social upheaval as the country of Nigeria. In its distant past, Nigeria was a British colony and functioned as such until 1960. Independence brought to Nigeria national sovereignty and a deliverance from colonial grievances. However, sovereignty also proved painful as the country passed through a series of military regimes. The elimination of many social services, the detention and imprisonment of journalists, students and critical scholars, the governmental mismanagement of funds, widespread unemployment and riots, all contributed to the stress of post-colonial Nigerians.<sup>1</sup> Religiously, Islam was predominant in the North and Christianity was predominant in the South. Animism had influence in both the North and the South. Many critics looking at Nigeria despaired at the seemingly hopeless state of affairs.

What critics often didn't see was the rumblings of something wonderful happening just below the surface. In 1987, pained by the spiritual and social plight of Nigeria, Christian believers began uniting

together and holding prayer meetings. As many Nigerians were celebrating the independence of their country, many others were gathering in prayer meetings, crying out to God for deliverance and revival. Some on their knees, some pacing the floor, some praying silently, some shouting loudly, with yearning and expectancy, believers began calling on the God of Heaven to stretch out His hand in Nigeria.<sup>2</sup> Prayer meetings grew into a prayer movement as more Nigerian Christians became involved.

Along with the prayer rumblings came something else, a revival among students, sweeping university campuses. Students were getting saved and telling others about their new-found spirituality. The revival spread beyond the universities into Nigerian society as a whole. Many churches in Nigeria are preaching the Gospel boldly. Many Churches have also established social institutions and services such as hospitals, banks and soup kitchens.<sup>3</sup> In recent years (reference material published in 2004), Nigeria has seen the rise of super-churches, comprised of many thousands of believers. One church, the Deeper Life Bible Church, has a membership of 150, 000 people.<sup>4</sup>

More than once, there have been open, Christian public meetings that have gathered over one million people in one place at one time. May God be praised for the revival and the upsurge of faith that has come to Nigeria.

Shawn Stevens

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- Ihonverbere, Julius O. Nigeria : The Politics of Adjustment & Democracy. New Brunswick: Transaction Pub., 1994.
- Thompson, Joseph and Peter C. Wagner. Eds. Out of Africa. Ventura: Regal, 2004.
1. Julius O Ihonverbere, Nigeria : The Politics of Adjustment & Democracy (New Brunswick: Transaction Pub., 1994), 1.
  2. Joseph Thompson, "Rising From The Mediocre To The Miraculous," in Out of Africa, ed. C. Peter Wagner and Joseph Thompson (Ventura: Regal, 2004), 29.
  3. Ibid., 30, 33.
  4. Peter Wagner, "Introduction," in Out of Africa, Ed. C. Peter Wagner and Joseph Thompson (Ventura: Regal, 2004), 10.

## A CHURCH ON THE ROCK

Sometimes, God does His greatest work through men and women whom you would not, initially, expect Him to use. Passed over by men, falling short of what everyone considers the basic requirements of leadership, a man is selected by God to be an object of His divine workmanship. One such man is Paul Adefarasin. Paul was born in Lagos, Nigeria, to caring parents. Wanting the best for him, they sent him to high school in England and to university in the United States. Despite all he had going for him, turmoil was brewing inside of Paul. He had begun experimenting with drugs and, before long, was thoroughly addicted. He became an outcast to family and friends and a disappointment to all who had previously believed in him. Paul's life was spinning out of control so he decided to return to Nigeria. There awaiting him was terrible news.

Paul's father was diagnosed with cancer and had been given three months to live. Paul was desperate. Who could help him? He turned to spiritualists and witchdoctors for assistance. To Paul's disappointment, witchcraft did not help. In the depths of despair, Paul turned to an old schoolmate for advice. This friend asked

Paul to come with him to meet his mother. Paul was about to meet an amazing woman. She was a woman of great faith and she quickly gained Paul's trust. Paul told his story to this sympathetic listener and, after a while, she offered to pray with him. Paul says:

*As we prayed together she said with more sincerity and authority than I'd ever heard in anyone's voice, 'Father.' Immediately, the room was filled with the presence of God. She paused for what seemed like an eternity and then said again, 'Father.' Never before had I experienced the tangible presence of God like I did in that room as wave after wave of His essence washed over me. She prayed for me first in English and then in the strangest language I had ever heard. Rather than alarm me, however, it actually comforted me a great deal.<sup>1</sup>*

Something happened to Paul that day. He was no longer the same person. One day, a friend came to visit him and during their discussion the friend told Paul about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He prayed for Paul and, again, Paul had a special experience. He says; "Immediately, I felt God's power flow through me in an astonishing way... the next six months of my life were truly incredible as I felt the sovereign hand of God rest

firmly on my life." 2 More good things were in store. Paul decided to visit his father and, while there, laid hands on him and prayed for him to be healed. Miraculously, Paul's father recovered and lived for another seven years.

Saved and baptized in God's Spirit, Paul began sensing a call on his life to the ministry. He began a small house church with seven people and called it the House on the Rock. Prayer became a huge emphasis. Prayer meetings would often carry on through the night. More people started coming and contributing. They expanded to holding meetings in a restaurant. It was reported that in 2004, House on the Rock had a membership of seven thousand with thirty-six branch churches. They have community-based outreaches as well, such as a feeding program, relief for disaster victims, prison outreach and a rehabilitation program for former prisoners.

May God be praised for this good work.

Shawn Stevens

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1. Adefarasin, Paul. "The Kingdoms of This World." In Out of Africa. Ventura: (Regal, 2004), 139.
2. Ibid, 140.

#### A WORD OF CORRECTION

It happens from time to time that I find an error in some piece of writing which I have put out and I am writing a note of correction concerning one of my ministry books that I used to distribute, posted on the web site and which was advertised in the Pentecost, titled "Salvation." I have found an error in this book and I would like to make it known to you and also apologize for not catching this mistake before printing and distributing it. On page 35 Mark 8:34-36 is quoted but not all of verse 34 is there. The beginning words of the verse "When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them," are missing. I have stopped distributing this book although most of its material I am about to reprint in tract form. If you have any old copies still around, I ask that you would not give these out. Thank you. God bless you.

Shawn Stevens