

THE PENTECOST

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THE PENTECOST



If you walk the streets of New Orleans today, you will see collapsed houses, washed-out businesses and deserted neighborhoods. You may also see groups of servant-minded men and women, busy at work, extending a helping hand. They are ambassadors of Jesus Christ. Little by little, they are rebuilding what was lost. In this issue, one of them will share her story. In these pages, we are thinking about servanthood. We will move from New Orleans to Nigeria, to Russia, and see God's hand at work. May this arouse faith within us to believe for revival in our communities as well.

Shawn Stevens

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FROM NIGERIA TO RUSSIA, IN JESUS' SERVICE

He was born in Nigeria, but his calling would take him to the other side of the world. In 1986, the nineteen-year old Sunday Adelaja sat in his living room watching a Christian television program. As the evangelist preached, Sunday understood the gospel for the first time. He immediately responded by committing his life to the Lord. This was the start of the greatest adventure of his life.

Sunday began looking at his educational options. Two were open to him: He could study in either the United States or Russia. After prayer, he sensed that God wanted him to go to Russia. He acted on this leading and soon found himself at Byelatrussian State University. There seemed to be a very dismal spirit to the whole university and Sunday had some hard adjustments to make.

One adjustment came in the form of the communist party youth entering his apartment and demanding that he take down, from his wall, a picture of the crucifixion. They called it propaganda and said that it was grounds for dismissing him from the university. Sunday's first inclination was to resist, but then he sensed the Lord telling him to let them remove the picture from the wall, but not to let them remove Jesus from his heart.

With Jesus living and shining in Sunday's heart, in 1990 he completed his studies and engaged in much ministry. Some circumstances led him to relocate to

Kiev where he worked for a T.V. station. It was here that he was given his own hour-long, weekly television program, free of charge. By the end of 1993, Sunday had planted a church in Kiev.

Sunday's church was growing and this disturbed government officials. A decision was made to bring down the "uncontrollable sect." Sunday was summoned to appear at the police station. He was charged with "desocializing" children. It was discovered that some children from the church had stopped watching television, and that others had begun criticizing the ungodly behavior of peers and family. The authorities felt that Sunday was brainwashing them. His passport was seized, his visa canceled and a deportation letter was issued.

The government authorities may have been against him, but Sunday appealed to his God. His church began a forty-day fast, and Sunday himself set aside large blocks of time for prayer. Court appeals were made and, in the end, the charges were dropped.

Today, Sunday's church has over 20,000 members. The church has given birth to forty-eight daughter churches in the Kiev region. They have also planted over two hundred churches worldwide. Their drug rehab center has helped two thousand people. As well, two thousand people are fed daily by the church's soup kitchen. His television and radio program broadcasts to eight million people weekly. May God be praised.

Shawn Stevens

Reference:

Adelaja, Sunday. "Go To A Land That I Will Show You!" *In Out of Africa*. Ventura: Regal, 2004.

HE WILL REVIVE US

Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him. And let us know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth.

Hosea 6:1-3 American Standard Version

In the 8th century BC, these words flowed from the lips of the prophet Hosea. He lived in a time of transition. Under King Jeroboam II, in the northern kingdom of Israel, and King Uzziah, in the southern kingdom of Judah, God's people had been enjoying a time of prosperity. Assyria, the world power of the time, was preoccupied with its northern and eastern borders. This time of prosperity, however, did not lead to a prosperity of faith. Instead, wickedness spread. After Jeroboam II's death, Israel fell into great political instability and Assyria, under new leadership, became aggressive towards Israel. Under the strain and anguish of seeing God's people wallowing in impiety and the strain of the danger on Israel's borders, Hosea cried out this appeal. He called Israel to return to the Lord and throw herself on His mercy.

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If Hosea was alive today, we might find him feeling a similar way and saying a similar thing to us. Living in a prosperous, postmodern world of relative values and situation ethics, many modern 21st century men and women continue their journey away from God and His truth. Our backsliding is in spite of present dangers which should cause us to run to God all the harder. Aids threatens and claims the lives of millions and international terrorism has risen beyond what would have been imagined only one generation ago. Violent crimes all too often go practically unpunished as court systems make lenient rulings. Stress-related illness afflicts large numbers. Yet, people today, in many cases, feel that they are better off living away from God, rather than living with a God who would ride their lives. Even in many churches some have this same apathy.

Friend, this is an apathy from which, at this present time, we can return. Are you torn? He will heal. Are you stricken? He will bind you up. He has a work and a transformation to do in you and me which is infinitely worth submitting to. Come, let us return to the Lord.

He will revive us. Let those words sink in. Our year of jubilee is coming. But there is a hump to get over. Unbelief, pride, self-sufficiency, and inflexibility to change have chained us down and kept us from flying in the skies of revival. Self-satisfaction also cements us in our present state. This cement must be broken up. Friend, let us break loose from our habit-beaten path and cry to God for His purposes to be fulfilled in us. Let us not make excuses for sin. We sometimes extol the sacrifices of great missionaries, but God doesn't have two standards of consecration. We are to be consecrated

to Him and to His service, even if that service is in our own nation. We need all of the fruit, gifts, empowerment, wisdom, direction and anointing that we can receive from the Lord.

He will come to us like the rain. This shower shall be even more refreshing than natural rain would be to a dehydrated desert traveler. Oh, to be ushered into the spiritual and heavenly realm where we are feeding on Christ and where the deeper Christian life is our normal experience. He will revive us. He will come to us like the rain. Brother, sister, do you, do I, dare to believe? Do we dare to hold this scripture before the Lord and claim it as a promise?

Pray with me:

Jesus, we return to You. Our sins have torn us. Our sins have stricken us down. We need Your forgiveness. We need Your grace. We need Your healing and binding, that we may live in Your sight. In times of natural prosperity we have not always been thankful, nor have we always pursued spiritual prosperity with hungry hearts. We have even been careless. We have been apathetic. Now Lord, we see it and return. Forgive us. Heal us. Revive us and come to us like the rain. We are the dehydrated desert traveler. We need all of the life, healing, fruit, spiritual gifts, wisdom, and direction that You will give us. Revive us and come to us like the rain. We have seen it in Your word and now faith is rising. Our eyes are lifting also and we fix them on You. We close up our umbrellas and lift up our buckets. Answer our prayer and fill us with Your Spirit.

Shawn Stevens

Scripture taken from The American Standard Version

~ THE BEAUTY OF SERVANTHOOD ~

I once read a story about the construction of the Milan Cathedral, in Italy. When it was finished, a large crowd gathered to see it formally dedicated. Amongst the noise and chatter of the crowd, the voice of a little girl could be heard by some standing nearby. She exclaimed, "I helped to build that!" A guard, hearing this, asked her to show him what she had done. She explained that she had carried a plate of dinner to her father, one of the construction workers, as he was on the job. Her humble part, although unknown to almost everyone involved, was nonetheless a contribution. This contribution was especially appreciated by her father, who was nourished and encouraged by this act of service.

Friend, do you ever feel that your small acts of service to others are meaningless? If you do, then you may have arrived at this feeling by comparing yourself to others or, perhaps, were influenced by the criticism of friends or family. But let's turn to the Scriptures and, most specifically, to the words of Jesus to His disciples: —*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you: but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*

(Mathew 20:25-28)

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Jesus' concept of servanthood and greatness was radically different from that of the people who heard Him teach. No doubt it is contrary to the popular thought of today as well. Jesus viewed servanthood as an honor and a privilege. How so? It is so because serving God and others is the greatest thing we could do with our life and our time. The servant has discovered that "...It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35). This is more than a profound piece of advice from Jesus; it is the whole secret to fulfillment in life. It is the servant who has the greatest experience of giving. It is the servant who, at the end of his or her life, can look back and say that he gave more to the world than he took. That is a beautiful thing.

What happens to us when we don't serve others? One result is that we become ever more focused on ourselves. We start arguing among ourselves over who is the greatest. "Greatest" again takes on a worldly definition until Jesus, once again, through His word or through circumstances, begins to cause a shift in our thinking. He again lets us see the beauty of His example, living to serve and giving His life as a ransom for many.

Christian, who are we to serve? In the Scriptures, the term "servant" is often used in the context of being a servant to God. This is our foremost service. If we look further in the Scriptures, we find "servant" is also used in other contexts as well. Paul commended a Christian woman named Phoebe for being "...a servant of the church in Cenchrea," (Romans 16:1). Serving the church is a great honor and privilege. Paul takes servanthood even further when he says, "For though I am free from all men, I have made

myself a servant to all, that I might win the more," (1 Corinthians 9:19). Paul served everyone, not just the church.

Although I have talked about service being in different contexts, really, for the Christian, serving fellow believers is not a separate context from serving God. Why? It is because our service to fellow believers is done as unto the Lord Himself. Jesus taught that one day He will return and gather the nations before Him. The group that stands on His right will hear him say "...Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me." (Matthew 25:34-36). Surprised to hear this, they will ask when did they do this for Christ? He will answer them, "...Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me." (Matthew 25:40).

So, brother and sister in Christ, this is our privilege, to serve God, to serve each other, and to serve the world. One day our lives will be over, and with it, our opportunity for service. We will never be able to give back to God more than He has given to us but, if we live this way, we will be able to say that we gave back to the world more than we took from it. Let's follow the example of Christ and know the blessing of giving and of serving.

Shawn Stevens

MADNESS AND MERCY ON THE STREETS OF NEW ORLEANS

"I would like to introduce you to a friend of mine, Amanda Ingeveld. During Trinity Western University's Spring Break, she spent a week in New Orleans, with a team of staff and students from TWU, working with Samaritan's Purse. She's back! She has this to say:"

Where does one begin?

This question can be answered in a number of contexts. Where does one begin to describe the extent of chaos and heroism that is, and was, New Orleans? Destruction beyond what many could have ever imagined: entire blocks flattened and thousands of homes unlivable. Yet, along with this, there are stories of heroism, beyond what one would think humanly possible. Rescuing people from rooftops, 20 hours a day, determining to ignore the bullets flying down the street. Police officers, undertaking overtime shifts,



patrol the streets while their homes are in ruins and their families are in another state.

As our team walked into the first house we gutted, I wondered, "Where do I begin?" Flooding had, sometimes literally, turned the contents of the house upside down. Everything was mixed together, wet, moldy, full of bugs, and mired in 4" of mud. We began one piece at a time. We dug in, sledgehammers, crowbars, and shovels flying, determined to make a difference. Sore muscles, aching heads, and hursing hearts are testament to a oneness of purpose, to glorify God, both within ourselves and externally to any passers-by. Some wonder aloud if it's worth the effort. Others believe that it has to be.

Smiles, laughter, hugs, and tears—where do I begin to share the beauty that I saw in New Orleans? I see a city that has been brought to her knees; many have recognized, and accepted, the humility that this should

bring. Churches traditionally divided work shoulder-to-shoulder under one name. Residents share their lives, heartaches, joys, and thankfulness with strangers, and we come away better for it. The dedication and unconditional love that the Samaritan's Purse staff have for the people of this city, and for the city's future, is inspiring. I consider it

a joy and a privilege to have been able to enjoy the sights and sounds of a city that's rebuilding, and to participate in the recovery process, as small as my contribution may seem. Every house gutted, and every family returned, encourages more people to come home. The more life that is seen on these streets, the more likely government officials are to continue the reconstruction process.

Annida Ingeveid



THE GARDEN OF MY LOVE FOR YOU

That you'd see, this I do,
That I clean you through and through
That My love would come,
And now, My son, would make your heart all new
That I'd be all alone
In your heart which is My throne.
No other god, no other dream,
No other place where you have been,
I take you to a place that's new,
The garden of My love for you.

That I'd see, this You do,
That You clean me through and through,
That Your love would come
To this, Your one, and make my heart all new
That You'd be all alone
In my heart which is Your throne.
No other god, no other dream,
No other place where I have been,
Take me to the place that's now,
The garden of Your love, so true.

Shawn Stevens

B O O K S

In this issue I would like to feature two of my books. You may read these books online or request a hard copy from this ministry. God bless you.



GOD'S BOOK FOR MAN: THE BIBLE

There are millions of people who love the Bible. Does the Bible stand up to higher criticism? Has it been accurately passed on from early history to our day? Is it credible and, if so, what does it have to say? Explore these important questions with me in the pages of this book.

THE MINISTRY OF DAVID BRAINERD

The way was difficult and there were few who encouraged him. However, David Brainerd would not be swayed from his life mission to the North American Indians. Consider with me the life and ministry of this great pioneer missionary.



