

THE PENTECOST

ISSUE #9 DECEMBER 2006



THE PENTECOST



WELCOME TO WINTER.

WELCOME TO DECEMBER. WELCOME TO THE NINTH ISSUE OF THE PENTECOST! IN THIS ISSUE, WE WILL BE LOOKING AT SPIRITUAL HUNGER AND JESUS' PROMISE CONCERNING IT. WE WILL ALSO BE LOOKING AT REVIVAL IN ROMANIA AND KENYA. GOD BLESS YOU.

SHAWN STEVENS

IN THIS ISSUE

Hungering and Thirsting for

Righteousness: Part Two3

Revival in Romania4

Revival in Kiambu, Kenya5

Books.....7

At the Name of Jesus8

Zion Tape Ministries

P. O. Box 933,
Lynden, WA 98264,
U. S. A.

<http://members.shaw.ca/ziontapeministries>
fststevens@shaw.ca

HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS : PART TWO

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled. Matthew 5:6*

In our October issue we looked at this scripture. We saw two applications for the word “righteousness.” We discussed hungering and thirsting for salvation. Secondly, we discussed hungering and thirsting for ever-increasing godliness and for a greater revelation of the Lord. This article continues with the second application.

Bible commentator Mathew Henry says that, “*Righteousness is here put for all spiritual blessings*”¹ It is the spiritual blessing of greater communion with the Lord that we are after. This is not a selfish request. The Lord created us to worship and know Him. Adam, the first man, had a beautiful relationship with God. Sadly, the fall of man broke this communion. Fortunately, through God's redemptive act, a provision for the mending of that break has been made. When Jesus died and rose again he opened a whole new world up to mankind. The doorway to God's kingdom was mercifully thrown open and men and women began entering. The temple in Jerusalem had two curtains. One hung in front of the Holy Place and the other partitioned off the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. When Jesus died on the cross, this second curtain was torn from top to bottom. This symbolized that God had made a provision so that man could again pass through the barrier into fellowship with God.

Christian, how far have you stepped inside this curtain? How deep have you gone in God and how

hungry are you to go deeper? Just as we hunger for food to sustain us and water to refresh us, communion with the Lord has the same effect spiritually for the Christian. This hunger can be seen in the life of the young 18th century missionary, David Brainerd. Deep in the woodlands of America, Brainerd prayed his heart out to God. His journal records hungry and thirsty words such as these:

*I retired pretty early for secret devotions; and in prayer God was pleased to pour such ineffable comforts into my soul that I could do nothing for some time but say over and over, 'Oh my sweet Savior! O my sweet Savior! Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth, that I desire beside Thee.' If I had a thousand lives my soul would gladly have laid them all down at once to have been with Christ. My soul never enjoyed so much of heaven before.*²

Friend, do you desire to give up your soul to the Lord afresh? Do you hunger to encounter Him today? Do you thirst to have Him fill your life with His Spirit? How do you get hungry? Cry out to God and ask for hunger. Ask for an experience with Him. Experience will make us hungry for more. God is the source of spiritual hunger; He is also the source of spiritual food and spiritual fulfillment. He is also the one who has said of those who hunger and thirst for righteousness that “...they shall be filled.”

Spiritual hunger causes us to keep our perspective right. It causes us to lose our desire for the rat race we are caught up in and, instead, gain a heart for God's kingdom. For the spiritually hungry, all of the lesser things of this world become dim and even unattractive compared to the spiritual riches of Christ. Spiritual hunger causes us to cry out to God, asking for Him to make His presence known.

continued on page 6

REVIVAL IN ROMANIA

Ceausescu couldn't prevent it. Communism couldn't coerce it away. Repression couldn't extinguish it. Romania would know revival in 1974.

Life in 20th century Romania was hard. The country lay under the tyrannical regime of Nikolai Ceausescu. Energy and food shortages led to many deaths. In many state orphanages, children were given transfusions of polluted blood. Telephones were bugged, and many who attempted to flee across its borders were shot.

If life was difficult for Romanians in general, it was especially difficult for Christians in particular. Systematic campaigns were launched with the goal of weakening and destroying the Christian Church. There were laws restricting religious freedom. Pastors routinely had their preaching licenses withdrawn and many were imprisoned. Christians, in general, were discriminated against and given the poorest of job opportunities. Pastors (who were not in jail) were only allowed to preach to their own congregations. Evangelism and children's ministry were banned.

Amidst this repression, the Church of Romania was pressing forward. Many Christians were banding together for prayer meetings. In 1964, one man, Vasile Talos, while in military training, was converted to Christianity, baptized the next year and began preaching. He gained permission to attend seminary and later became pastor of a Baptist church in Bucharest. He was routinely harassed, but persevered through these difficult days. He began meeting together with two men, Josef Sarac and Josef Tson, for weekly prayer. Two other pastors, Vasile Brinzei and Pascu Gabau, joined the group.

They committed to support the family of any member in the group who might be imprisoned for their increasingly bolder Christian stand.

One bold stand that they took was the baptizing of outsiders who were coming to Christ. Talos baptized between forty and fifty without state permission. Brinzei wrote and gave out a paper titled, "The Present Situation of the Baptist Church in Romania," in which he argued that the state had interfered in the affairs of the Church. He was seized and interrogated by the government. A copy of the paper was taken out of the country, copied, and ended up in the hands of some United States senators and congressmen. In response to U. S. pressure, Ceausescu agreed to right some of the abuses outlined in the paper. Church leaders were calling for the right to hold worship meetings, the right to do evangelistic work and for the lifting of restrictions on baptism. They were also calling for the relicensing of many pastors.

One pastor to regain his license was Liviu Olah. For three years he had been barred from preaching, during which time he engaged in much prayer and fasting. In 1974, he was permitted to become an assistant pastor in the second Baptist church in Oradea.

Olah's preaching had a powerful effect on those who came to hear him. He would preach on the judgment of God and on hell. Many came under deep conviction and began crying out for God's mercy and forgiveness. Church members and non-Christians alike could be found praying for forgiveness. Some testified that there was a "divine power floating in the air." Olah even preached the gospel at weddings and funerals and, before long, large numbers were being converted. By June of 1974, more than 100 had been baptized and,

during the next six months, another 249 were baptized. By the close of the year, 356 had testified to finding new faith in Christ and that year the Church had grown from 550 to over a thousand.

News spread of the growth in Olah's church and other churches began experiencing similar things. Tson and other pastors continued to protest over government interference in church affairs. They also boldly spoke out against the moral bankruptcy of communism. Prayer became a huge emphasis within the revival and, in addition to participating in large church prayer meetings, Christians were urged to begin prayer groups.

In the Romanian Revival, the lives of countless Romanians were touched and changed. Their faith outlived the harsh pressures that it was subjected to. Ceausescu was removed from power in 1989. Communism has fallen as well and the Romanian Church has continued on. Their courage and tenacity bears testimony to God's preserving hand on His Church.

Shawn Stevens

Reference:

Davies, Ron. "The Beginning of the Revival in Romania" Reformation Today, No. 136, November to December, 1993, 19-25.

REVIVAL IN KIAMBU, KENYA

In the late 1980s, Kiambu was considered one of the most dangerous towns in Kenya. This town of 65,000 people had the highest crime rate in the nation. Murder, rape and violence were common, and the Church was not growing.

In 1988, Thomas and Margaret Mathee sensed that God was calling them to Kiambu. They answered this call and, after a six-month period of intense prayer, they further sensed that the dark spiritual forces over the town had been broken. They held their first outside crusade and 200 people committed their lives to Christ. To accommodate the crowds, the church moved into a large grocery store and named the new location, "The Prayer Cave." There have been many conversions, the church has come alive, and its members, filled with zeal and enthusiasm. The Prayer Cave has expanded to as many as 5,000 members. Prayer has been a major emphasis and as many as 400 intercessors have gathered for daily 6:00 A. M. prayer. The church has also held Friday night prayer vigils and Wednesday night prayer gatherings called Operation Prayer Storm.

Although I do not have recent data, since these happenings it has been reported that the atmosphere of Kiambu has changed dramatically. There have been reports that the town has seen the crime rate fall to one of the lowest in the country. The fervent, effectual prayers of Kenyans have reached the Lord's ears and He has poured out a blessing upon their land.

Shawn Stevens

Reference:

Otis, George. Transformations. Sentinel Group. Videocassette, 1999.

Some would question, “Why ask God to descend and make His presence known when He is everywhere anyway?” It is true that God is an omnipresent God who is everywhere anyway. However, He is still present in some places in a specific way that He isn't in other places. For example, He is present in the hearts of His children in a way that He isn't in those who do not yet know Him. In a similar way, God is here in our workplace, schools and community. However, there is a greater awareness of God when He makes His presence known and when we experience Him in a special way. So, we cry out for Him to come.

In the 1904 Welsh Revival, a miner walked in on a service and was gripped by an awareness of God. He cried out, “Oh, God is here.” He stood in the doorway for a time, too afraid to come in the door or to leave the building. We have been going it alone for too long. We need the Lord to fill us with His Spirit. We need for Him to meet with us. We need communion and encounters with Him. All things are possible. God has granted communion to others who have sought Him. He has communed with His called-out ones. Again, we read from the diary of Brainerd:

*At night, God enabled me to give my soul up to Him, to cast myself upon Him, to be ordered and disposed of according to His sovereign pleasure; and I enjoyed great peace and consolation in so doing. My soul took sweet delight in God; my thoughts freely and sweetly centered on Him. Oh that I could spend every moment of my life to His glory.*³

Brother and sister, we can drink of heaven while living on earth. How hungry are you? How hungry am I for this experience? Let us pray:

Oh Lord, who fills the hungry with good things,

we come to You now. We want to go deep behind the veil. We want to go as deep in You as Your grace will allow. May our lives be like the Holy of Holies. Lord, we want to follow You ardently as others have done. May there be examples from our generation of those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and may we be they. Bring the things of Your kingdom near to us. We give up our souls to You afresh. Have us wholly and make us holy. Fill us with Your Spirit. Fill us with Your righteousness. Our eyes are looking upward to You, who have promised to fill the hungry. None of the lesser things of the world will satisfy this inner ache. You, Oh Lord, are a rewarder of them who diligently seek You. May this be our hour of visitation. Make Your presence known. Your presence is healing to us. Your presence is life to us. Give us the faith to lay hold of You. We are not asking to be enriched with this world's wealth, but rather with the spiritual blessing of deep communion with You. Be glorified in us and in the witness of You living in us. Amen.

Shawn Stevens

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on The Whole Bible*, Vol. V., (Iowa: World Bible Publishers, n.d.), 50.

² David Brainerd, *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd*, Ed. Jonathan Edwards (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 83.

³ *Ibid.*, 83.

B O O K S

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

THE MINISTRY OF SAMUAL BILL

THE MINISTRY OF SAMUEL BILL

Dedicated to God's service before he was ever born, Samuel Bill came into this world, found Christ and answered God's call to the Nigerian missionfield. Follow his life story through its valleys of tragedy and its peaks of victory.

REVIVALS IN INDONESIA

It is a mysterious land with ancient beginnings, Indonesia. God has moved there. Read the compelling and exciting accounts of revival and about the servants there that God has used.

REVIVALS IN INDONESIA



AT THE NAME OF JESUS

*For unto us a Child is born
In the city of David, Christ the Lord.
We're commissioned to tell and we shall proclaim
That there's life and healing in His holy name.*

*At the name of Jesus the chains do break,
And the walls come down with a mighty quake,
And the captive's freed and the sinner saved
By His saving power and amazing grace.*

*So great a salvation that You've given me.
You gave Your love to feel and Your light to see.
Oh, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
Be exalted high, I praise Your holy name.*

Shawn Stevens

