

Challenge

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

September 2004

PRAYER LETTER OF CHALLENGE LITERATURE FELLOWSHIP (AUST.) INC.

A number of years ago I was walking by a park at night. It was pitch black which meant that you could not make out even the darkest of outlines of an object in front of you. All of a sudden I heard a growl coming at pace towards me. I tried desperately to see what it was that was coming at me but couldn't. In a situation like that you are trying to see what you can do to limit the damage and you are fighting to keep your emotions under control. I was wearing a heavy overcoat because it was winter and because I could not see what was coming at me, I braced myself for the worst. My feet seemed like they were glued to the footpath and I struggled to hold back crying out into the darkness.

Then out of the pitch blackness came two Doberman dogs running along together with their tongues hanging out having a great time together, absolutely oblivious to the fact that they had taken several years off my life. Fear is one of those emotions that can completely immobilize us in our spiritual journey, often because we are worrying about our future. Going through valley experiences are not pleasant but they are nonetheless an essential part of our spiritual growth and development. Often our response to difficult times is to pray that God will remove the problem, or take us out of the situation that is causing the problem.

However, if you look through the bible you will notice that rarely does God remove people out of difficult times. A classic example of this is Daniel. He had been sentenced to the lion's den and was looking right down the proverbial gun barrel. I have often wondered what he was praying when they were leading him to the den. I am sure that the soldiers were thinking that this was not going to take too long for Daniel to become a tasty meal for starving lions. God, however, had other ideas because it was going to be one of the means of getting the gospel to the rest of the world.

We need to see what David brings to our attention in Psalm 23:4 when he states that; "I will fear no evil; for you are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. No matter what we are going through we need to realize that we have God with us. Remember Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and how they were cast into a furnace heated seven times hotter than normal. Have you ever wondered why that was allowed by God? I think that the main reason was that there would be no doubt who was responsible for the deliverance of the tree young men. When Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace he saw someone who looked like the Son of Man. There was Jesus in the midst of the furnace right alongside three young men who must have been wondering what their future was. God wonderfully delivered them through the furnace and they came out of their trial without even the slightest smell of burnt flesh.

It is also very encouraging to know that God is not only there for us, particularly in testing times, but that His rod and staff are being used to comfort us. A shepherd used a rod to protect his sheep from the enemy such as wolves, lions and bears. A shepherd used his staff for a number of reasons. One important purpose was to discipline wayward sheep. It is important for us to understand that whatever trials come our way they have first come via the Lord. Whatever the circumstances God is fully aware of them and indeed has allowed them to come our way so that His divine purposes can be achieved in our lives.

In fact once we see what God is trying to do, in all its importance, it brings real comfort to our hearts and puts us in a place where we can learn from our trials rather than complain about them. This is also another reason why we don't have to fear evil because God has filtered it through His sovereign providential working. I don't think that I know anything more encouraging than that. We have a wonderful divine shepherd who cares for us in providing for our every need spiritually, emotionally and physically.

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge



(Please turn over)

Praise

1. Praise God for the possibilities that are starting to open up in South America for the paper. We think it may happen by the middle of next year and if it happens it will be our first language edition, which will be Spanish.
2. Praise God for the encouraging feedback that we are continuing to get from the results of our Impact Africa mission team. We saw God bless in special ways such as seeing a hundred plus children giving their lives to Jesus as a result of the work of the VBS team in a squatter camp. We were also able to distribute over 40,000 papers in various venues.
3. We thank God for the great response to our Olympic edition of Challenge and for our move to a complete full-colour newspaper.
4. We are rejoicing at the opportunity for Carl Carmody to go to the US again and visit a church in North Carolina where they are running a missions conference.
5. Praise God for our faithful team of writers who do a fantastic job in the process of providing quality copy for each edition.
6. Praise the Lord for a very encouraging trip to Ghana. The prospects are looking very good and we are hopeful of getting the first edition in there by the end of the year, or the beginning of next year.

Prayer

1. Pray for the Lord's clear leading in all the opportunities that are presenting themselves. It is easy to get carried away with all these opportunities and get over committed. We so need the Lord's leading and wisdom.
2. Pray for the Lord's provision financially for a number of key areas. We still have about \$6,000 to go on covering the cost of our air conditioners. Our African fund is under a fair amount of pressure with all that is going on in Africa. Please pray for princely gifts to come in not only for this area but also for our Australian office. Sorry that we have to mention finances but they are a daily reality that we can't do without.
3. Pray for the growth of our Australian Challenge. While we are seeing great things happening overseas our burden for Australia has not diminished; if anything it has increased. We would love to see it around 80,000 by the end of the year.
4. Pray for our representatives in South Australia and Victoria. Alan Bailey and Gil Cann are looking for opportunities to promote the Challenge into churches as we look to see our distribution increase to 80,000 per month.
5. Continue to pray for another editor to replace Carl Carmody. This will allow Carl to concentrate on the development and promotion of the Challenge ministry.

Special Request: We are still collecting books to send to African Pastors. If you have any good quality books on Christian Living, Commentaries, Biographies, etc., that you are no longer using, please contact us here at Challenge.



*Send your testimony to **Challenge** – Your conversion to Jesus Christ is a miracle, and is a wonderful means of witnessing to a lost world – Ring or write to Challenge for a testimony outline sheet.*

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