

How a Four-Day Bus Ride Changed My World

Last month God used a poor pastor from Malawi to challenge my suburban American priorities.

When I arrived in Nairobi, Kenya, last month to conduct a women's conference, my host, a journalist named Gideon, mentioned that my "pastor friend from Malawi" was waiting to see me. I was surprised to hear this, since I wasn't aware that I had a pastor friend from Malawi. I've never been to that country and I didn't remember talking to anyone from there.

"He says you've been e-mailing each other," Gideon said. "And he arrived today to see you."

The Re-Definition of Marriage: A View From Africa

In Uganda and Kenya, where polygamy is common, Christians are defending the Bible while we disdain it.

Two weeks ago when I was speaking in a women's conference in Kampala, Uganda, I asked the women to raise their hands if they grew up in a polygamous home. A majority of the hands went up. Then I asked how many wives lived in their father's home.

"How many had two wives living in the house?" I asked. A majority of the hands went up.

Spiritual Awakening: The Only Thing That Will Save Us

We can learn an important lesson from the East African Revival, which transformed a region 80 years ago.

The people of Uganda call it *Balokole*. In the Luganda language it means “the saved ones,” but the word became synonymous with the East African Revival—one of the most significant Christian movements in modern history.

This revival had humble beginnings in September 1929, just before America’s Great Depression. Historians trace it to a prayer meeting on Namirembe Hill in Kampala, Uganda, where a missionary to Rwanda, Joe Church, prayed and read the Bible for two days with his friend Simeoni Nsibambi. They felt God had showed them that the African church was powerless because of a lack of personal holiness.

The Radical New Look of

African Anglicanism

St. Kakumba Chapel in Uganda has grown from 500 to 5,000 members since Pastor Medad Birungi replaced stale traditions with Pentecostal vibrancy.

Pastor Medad Birungi was the least likely man to engineer a spiritual rebirth in the tradition-bound Church of Uganda. Raised in a polygamous home (his alcoholic father had six wives and 32 children), Birungi suffered horrible trauma, rejection and poverty. But he had a dramatic encounter with the Holy Spirit while he was a college student, and his moment of renewal is still having ripple effects throughout Uganda and the world.

Birungi was a religious Anglican before this experience. He despised Pentecostals and viewed them as sheep-stealers and misguided pretenders. But while he was performing with a choir on a conference stage near Kampala in 1987, he felt strangely compelled to run outside to pray. He was then literally arrested by the power of God. He fell to the ground and spoke in tongues for three hours.

Give Us Your Feedback: Is Celebrity Christianity Dead?

Here's your chance to shape the direction of Charisma in 2010. We really do care what you think.

An impressive collection of framed covers of *Charisma* decorate a hall around the corner from my office. Visitors often stop to admire the nostalgic lineup, which includes a 1975 issue

featuring healing evangelist Kathryn Kuhlman and a 1978 cover of South African theologian David du Plessis. These magazines offer a panoramic view of the history of the charismatic movement—warts and all.

I'll admit that sometimes I wince when I walk down this hallway to get coffee—and I cringe even more when I sort through my stash of old magazines. As much as I love to remember the old days—and to appreciate the spiritual giants we featured at times—it is painful when I realize that some people we wrote about did not finish well.

We Must Bow Down and Cry Out

On the anniversary of 9/11, I learned that we need extraordinary prayer in this time of national crisis.

Last week I attended a prayer gathering across the street from the World Trade Center site in New York City. Several dozen Christian leaders met in a cramped room overlooking the place where terrorists destroyed the tallest monument to America's financial power and killed more than 2,700 people in the process.

It was the eighth anniversary of 9/11. Flags in the city flew at half-mast while a drizzling rain made the gray mood even more somber. New York City firemen and police officers got respectful applause as they marched in a small parade along Church Street. A few blocks south, in Battery Park, thousands

of people filed past a mobile monument that bears the names of all 9/11 victims—including those killed in Washington, D.C. and Shanksville, Pa.

The Lost Message of Consecration

From reading some old books I've discovered a missing spiritual dimension. The Lord is inviting us to reclaim it.

A few months ago I went on a special diet. I put aside all newly published books and limited my reading to a small collection of Christian classics, mostly devotional works by Andrew Murray, Watchman Nee, E.M. Bounds, Charles Spurgeon, A.B. Simpson and Corrie Ten Boom. I knew God had a message for me in those musty pages.

I had noticed a similar theme in all these books, but it took me a while to crack the code. These writers from the 19th and 20th centuries wrote from a spiritual depth that I rarely see in the church today, and I wanted to know their secret. I slowly began to figure things out while reading A.B. Simpson's book, *A Larger Christian Life*, which he wrote in 1890 when the Holiness Movement was at its zenith in the United States.

Put Some Punctuation in Your Praise!

Facing a difficult situation? You need to release the shout of the Lord.

According to the rules of proper grammar, exclamation marks should be used rarely, and only when conveying extreme emotion. I'm sure you agree there is nothing more annoying than an article or e-mail FILLED WITH ALL CAPS AND PROFUSE EXCLAMATIONS!!! An overuse of such punctuation is the journalistic equivalent of screaming in a public library.

Yet exclamation marks do appear in the Bible, especially in the Psalms. Apparently there are times in our spiritual lives when extreme emotion and pumped-up volume are necessary.

Don't Get Infected With Last Days Fever

Don't let the sensationalism of eschatology distract you from the priority of evangelism.

You might remember Edgar Whisenant. He wrote a best-selling book called *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988*—and a much less popular sequel, *The Final Shout: Rapture Report 1989*. The second book said Jesus didn't come back in 1988 because the author, who was a former NASA engineer (!), missed his mathematical calculations by a year.

The mood of the 1980s was uneasy. After Ronald Reagan was elected president, some Christians began to surmise that

Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev was the Antichrist. When he died they gave the title to the next Soviet leader, Yury Andropov, and then to his successor, Konstantin Chernenko. When Chernenko died unexpectedly, people were certain that Mikhail Gorbachev was the Antichrist because he had that awful red birthmark on his forehead.

Finding God in Rwanda's Killing Fields

It has been 15 years since Rwanda's darkest tragedy. Here's how one pastor suffered in that holocaust—and now offers healing.

Unless you catch sight of the jagged scars on Emmanuel Kadege's* legs, you wouldn't know he is a survivor of Rwanda's genocide. During a conference last week in Pennsylvania he greeted me with a warm hug, a bright smile and a cheerful "Praise the Lord." But after we got to know each other, and I encouraged him to talk honestly, this 31-year-old pastor let down his guard and shared his horrific story.

A member of Rwanda's minority Tutsi population, Emmanuel was only 16 when leaders of the majority Hutu tribe announced on the radio that it was time to kill the "snakes" and "cockroaches"—their ominous code words for Tutsis. For 100 days—from April 6 to July 14, 1994—Hutu militants and thousands of civilians slaughtered an estimated 1 million people.