

Step Into Your Harvest

Recently Sharon Daugherty, one of my mentors, and I were discussing how many generals of the faith have transitioned into eternity in the last few years. During that time, the body of Christ on Earth has lost Bill Bright, Derek Prince, Kenneth (Papa) Hagin and many other powerful men and women of God. Of course, their homegoing has left a vacuum to be filled.

Before Moses died, God had begun to prepare Joshua to take his place. As Elijah approached the end of his life, Elisha stepped in and caught his mantle. God never allows Himself to be without a witness or vessel.

But how many of us are willing to answer His call and take our places in His kingdom? How many are willing to pay the price to do what He asks of us?

I was privileged to be mentored by Daisy Osborne, wife of T.L. Osborne. What a general of our time! She and the many other generals who have gone before us have given us a priceless legacy to build upon.

Part of that legacy is godly character. Though we live in an age in which immorality runs rampant, we are called to live lives, as they did, that are founded on biblical principles.

The other part is an undying passion for souls and a desire to reap a great harvest for God. If there is anything we can learn from our spiritual forebears, it is to keep focused on the supreme task of expanding the kingdom.

We are called to be co-laborers with Him, not to build our own names or ministries! He has a plan for our lives that was established before time began. He has orchestrated the seasons of our lives and numbered our days. He has positioned us in the kingdom for such a time as this. His infinite

foreknowledge allows Him to know where to place us at a specific time.

THE TASK WE FACE No other generation has ever had to face the challenges of our age—terrorism, same-sex marriages, ethnic cleansing, drug trafficking, partial birth abortions—to the degree that we do. Global politics are not as they were in the past century. The face of our world is rapidly changing, and the task before us is clear.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are more than 50 million dispersed refugees around the world seeking shelter, and the majority of those are women and children. In developing nations, especially in the 10/40 Window, 80 percent of the suffering and dehumanization is targeted toward women and children.

If ever there has been a time for enlistment by the Master it is now! He is saying to us, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, “Rise up, you women who are at ease, hear my voice; you complacent daughters, give ear to my speech” (Is. 32:9). He has heard the cries of His people who are oppressed and is recruiting deliverers.

When the children of Israel cried out to Him regarding the oppression of the Egyptians, he sent them Moses (see Ex. 3:9-10). When they sought Him about the oppression of Jabin, king of Canaan, He sent them Deborah, prophetess and judge (see Judg. 4). When Mordecai learned that Haman had drafted a decree in King Ahasuerus’ name to destroy all the Jews, God sent Esther to petition the king to revoke the decree (see Esth. 3-8).

Proverbs 31:8-9 (The Amplified Bible) declares: “Open your mouth for the dumb [those unable to speak for themselves], for the rights of all who are left desolate and defenseless; open your mouth, judge righteously, and administer justice for the poor and needy.” As women in this generation, we can’t be

content with auxiliary tea parties, fashion shows or other programs. We can't waste our time and energy seeking titles or positions.

A clarion call has gone out from heaven provoking women to rise up as laborers. A changing of the guard is taking place, and the baton is being passed to us to impact our families, our nation and the world. We must become the ones who raise the standard.

Women are needed on the forefront as never before because the global needs around the world affect women and children the most. Eighty percent of the population in the 10/40 Window is women and children, and the majority do not have access to proper health care and education.

Worldwide, more than 130 million children have never entered a classroom. In Sudan, only 2 percent of 7.5 million children complete primary school. Gang rapes and the devaluing of women are the biggest challenges for most women in developing countries.

In Pakistan, 42 percent of children are anemic, and many are sold into servitude by their parents. In Angola, young girls between the ages of 5 and 8 are sold into prostitution by their fathers. Most women between the ages of 15 and 49 in this African country have never heard of HIV or AIDS because of the lack of AIDS awareness programs.

GOD NEEDS US There is no question about the fact that God needs us to make a difference! But until we come to the altar and lay down our lives to be used by Him, we will continue to be trapped in the patterns of normality and selfishness. We cannot turn a deaf ear because we are all God has.

Nor can we continue to wait for validation or acceptance, or live our lives yielding to the opinion of the majority. We cannot allow ourselves to be in emotional and social bondage,

held hostage by what everyone else thinks or does.

We cannot be concerned about being politically correct at the expense of being divinely guided. As we empty ourselves, we learn that it is not about anyone's opinion but about becoming yielded vessels, humbly eager to be used by a merciful God to change a desperate world.

Fear of criticism and failure is what hinders many from moving out to do what God has called them to do. But just as God equipped those who have gone before us, He will equip us. The Word tells us that He fashions our hearts individually (see Ps. 33:15, NKJV) and that He has called us for His purpose: "[God] has saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began" (2 Tim. 1:9).

Clearly, what God is calling us to in this hour is far beyond ourselves, and we won't be willing to respond unless we come to understand that we are responsible for our generation.

Consider this: What if it were your Palestinian teenager who prided himself on his willingness to take his own life as a suicide bomber? What if you were one of the women pastors of China living in the grip of persecution? What if it were your 5-year-old daughter who was sold into prostitution in Angola or Sri Lanka, or your 7-year-old son who enlisted in the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) in Sudan?

When I work in massive refugee camps, especially the camps of Western Sahara, I am constantly plagued by such considerations. I could have been one of the 200,000 who live in a scorching desert without running water!

As the guards are changing, so are the desperate needs of the world. And multitudes of Spirit-led women are required to fill these needs and to address unjust issues concerning women and children around the globe.

Women have more resources, more rights and a voice that is stronger now than ever before in history; they have been liberated in Christ Jesus. But in many parts of the world, they are still oppressed—both as women and as Christians.

We must be like Esther, who, to fulfill God's purpose for her life, had to put her safety on the line. When the guard changed, and she found herself queen instead of Vashti, she determined to undertake for the Jews in spite of the danger she faced. Her brave battle cry was, "'If I perish, I perish!'" (Esth. 4:16).

In many restricted regions of the world, believers are required to defend their faith even to the point of death. Yet I don't believe God is looking for women to die for Him; I believe He desires an army of women who are committed to living solely for Him and doing His will throughout the earth.

Can you hear the voice of the Master saying to our generation, "'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?'" (Is. 6:8). If so, I pray your heart is already responding: "Lord, I will step to the plate and rise to the occasion. Here am I, Lord, send me! I will go for You wherever You need me most."

Perhaps you are wondering how you can be used and where you can be sent. Not all of us are called to travel the world to address the needs I've mentioned. But we can be as committed to God's causes as those who are and make as significant an impact.

Prayer is a powerful place to begin. Below are some alarming statistics you can pray about, asking God to intervene and cause His plan for mankind to prevail in each situation:

- More than 25 million children are in need of foster care and adoption in the United States.
- A woman is beaten every 15 seconds in the United States. Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44.

- In the United States, 1.3 women are raped every minute.
- There are now 150,000 women in U.S. prisons and jails. Seventy-five percent of women in prison are mothers. Two-thirds of these women have children under the age of 18.
- Approximately 1,370,000 abortions occur annually in the United States. Fifty-two percent of the women who have them are younger than 25; 19 percent are teenagers.
- There is a tremendous lack of proper health care and education for suffering women and children in the 10/40 Window nations.
- Five out of every 100 students drop out of high school in the United States.

As a Spirit-led woman, you can challenge other women to pray for our suffering sisters around the world, women who are not as fortunate as we are. Whether you are a member of a church auxiliary or women's fellowship, or are a pastor's wife, woman in ministry, homemaker, or student, there is a need for you to pray and to prompt your contemporaries to pray and take action now!

Regardless of your position or status, there is a harvest appointed to you (see Hos. 6:11). God is not looking for many who are noble or mighty; He is looking for yielded vessels who desire to please Him and fulfill His purpose.

Read a companion devotional.

Patricia Bailey is an evangelist and author. She is the founder of a number of organizations, including *Sister to Sister*, an international outreach to women in foreign countries.