

10 Lessons to Learn From Reinhard Bonnke's Pioneer Spirit

On a recent Saturday morning, I received a text message from Evangelist Daniel Kolenda (the successor to Reinhard Bonnke's ministry) letting me know that our dear brother Reinhard had passed away and that he was with Jesus.

This news saddened me and brought joy to my heart at the same time, as I was convinced that all of heaven rejoiced at a life well lived that included many eternal accomplishments!

Reinhard was truly a pioneer who impacted the continent of Africa and the world in unprecedented ways! His ministry grew to amazing levels as the Lord used him in a capacity that has been described as him being the Billy Graham of Africa.

His influence in Africa has been, and continues to be, historical on many fronts. In my multiple ministry travels to the continent of Africa over the years, I have oftentimes come in contact with the amazing fruit of Reinhard's ministry. I have communicated with many people who were directly impacted by him, and as result, were either saved, healed or delivered. What a legacy he leaves!

Even though Reinhard's ministry would eventually reach tens of millions, the fact is that he did not start off this way. Over the last several years as I have read the history of and talked to others about his life, I have been struck and blessed by his willingness to cut a path for others to walk on. In other words, he was willing to be faithful to a vision of reaching Africa, even when the fruit was minimal and the cost was high!

When I reflect upon the life of Reinhard, I am reminded of the

words of the great African missionary David Livingstone when he said, "If you have men who will only come if there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all."

This powerful quote by Livingstone is describing the spirit of a pioneer!

I will be forever grateful and indebted to men and women like Reinhard, Billy Graham, David Livingstone, Amy Carmichael, Adoniram Judson, William Carey, Evelyn Thompson, Arlis Murrell and so on. Their lives continue to make an eternal impact and the roads that they cut and traveled upon opened up access for many of us who now minister around the world.

In my ministry travels I oftentimes find myself in places like Africa, The Philippines, South America and such. Even though there are still many challenges and even dangers in various nations that I preach in, I can feel the price that others have paid in order for me to minister in these places. I literally find myself standing in and gaining inspiration from the spirit of pioneers who have gone before me! Their willingness to go and take the gospel into arenas that were challenging provides inspiration to many like myself.

There are many lessons to be learned from Reinhard and others who have pioneered works for God around the world. Some of them that come to mind and encourage me are as follows.

1. Never allow numbers or a lack thereof to dictate obedience to one's calling or commission from the Lord.
2. Never allow the praise of others or the lack thereof to determine obedience to a God-given vision.
3. Learn to be faithful over the small things in life and ministry.
4. Never lose site of the cross of Calvary. It is here that we realize and continue to realize the price that was paid for us to carry God's glory.

5. Learn to invest in others who will follow in your footsteps. We must understand that all real ministry vision is generational and not just about ourselves.
6. Never become a prisoner to finances. God is our provision and He will be faithful to His callings and commissions in our lives. However, He is not obligated to fund our personal endeavors that become more about us than about Jesus.
7. Reject elitism! Just because someone is anointed and used by God does not change the fact that they are no better than anyone else.
8. Live a life of biblical holiness based on a relationship with the Lord. We cannot have a divided heart and impure motives or actions *and* effectively pioneer a work that gives God glory.
9. Surround yourself with others who really know you and are able to bring encouragement and correction into your life.
10. Pray, pray, pray! Nothing takes the place of spending time with Jesus, including successful ministry activity.

I am so thankful for the life and ministry of Reinhard! I have been blessed to meet and sit under many great men and women of God over the last 34 years. However, Reinhard is clearly a man who has and will always stand out to me. He leaves a living legacy that will continue to impact many others in the days to come.

May the Lord continue to be glorified through his spiritual son Kolenda, and others that have been gloriously impacted by this dear servant of God. {eo}

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