

God's Purpose for Zambia

Before I came to this country, I searched the internet to learn more about Zambia. Much of what I found was negative, such as 1.5 million children living without parents; one of the poorest and least developed countries on earth; life expectancy was very low (about 35 years); high crisis of AIDS, malaria, drought etc, and the list keeps going on. However, since I arrived here two weeks ago, Zambia has appeared completely different to me.

Despite the many difficulties and challenges facing this country, Zambians' genuine smiles and kindness reflect the love of God everywhere I go. The transformative power of Christian education has truly infiltrated and shaped all areas of this country. I ate nshima as a physical meal, but whenever I eat this meal, I remember Shema (the spiritual meal that God provided to Israelites) in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength). Something I feel is that God leads and nourishes this country for a certain purpose.

This is the same situation in S. Korea right after the Korean War in 1950-1953 which left the country devastated. The Korean War resulted in approximately 3 million deaths; 50% of industrial facilities were totally destroyed; all people were deeply grieved, and many people nearly lost hope.

However, today S Korea is one of the top 10 world economies, a member of OECD (Organ for Economic Cooperation and Development); one of most highly educated countries; a global leader in tech, semiconductor, shipbuilding, automobile etc.

How did this become possible? What enabled them to transform their situation so dramatically? How could S. Korea make this today?

I can say with complete confidence that it is the miracle of God, that humans never can do, or never think about with their thoughts. It is the divine blessing from God. Koreans sought God, asked His interventions in their lives; Every day they prayed; every day they gathered together in the church, worshipped together and fellowshiped with others with Christian mindsets. Now, S Korea has become a strong Christian country. Several world biggest churches are in there. One church has 800,000 membership;

Most national leaders are Christians; Churches provided spiritual support, social networking relief efforts; Christianity contributed to the promotion of literacy, educational, civil engagement and spiritual wellbeing, thriving.

S Korea usually sends 30-40,000 missionaries every year to all countries, which ranks top 2 country globally after the USA (who sends more than 100,000 a year). Remember S Korea is a very small country. Zambia is 6 times larger than Korea.

Yes, God is able, he is a miracle worker. Since I came to Zambia two weeks ago, I have felt the strong conviction that God is working his miracle in Zambia. Listen, Zambia is now under God's miracle. Listen to what God is telling you, Zambians, in Isaiah 43:19 See I'm doing a new thing. Now it springs up. Do you not perceive it? I'm making a new way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland (Isa. 43:19).

I now see Zambia totally differently. In human eyes, this country is full of despair, negativity, failure and difficulties; however, in God's eyes, it is a precious, wonderful land that God created. God is working now, he will make a new way that humans can never imagine before. This is not my only personal perception, but it is evidenced that many Christian scholars agree.

The Pew Research Center projects that the Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa will grow substantially from 24% in 2010 to 38% by 2050. In other words, 4 out of 10 Christians in the whole world will live in this area and this area will be the center of world Christianity.

This will represent a major shift in the geographic center of Christianity from North America, Europe to Sub-Saharan Africa.

Let me explain this more in detail.

Nigeria will have the largest Christian population in the world. And around 155 million Christians by 2050. DR Congo will be 142 millions Christians. Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zambia will be the main Christian countries also. I know 98% of Zambians identified as Christians. Zambia is the only African country that explicitly declares itself a Christian nation in its constitution in 1991. Many other African countries who are dominantly Christians but are constitutionally secular or no official state religion.

Yes, Sub-Saharan Africa will be the center of global Christianity, and you will be the leader of all world Christianity.

Isaiah 60:1 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

Future Christian leaders, the next Billy Graham will come from here. A powerful pastor, missionary, educator, Christian scholar will come from Zambia in the near future. God will raise young Zambians to lead churches, schools, businesses, governments, ministries across the continent and the world.

God has positioned Zambia not merely to be a Christian nation in name, but to become a nation that raises Christian leaders who influence Africa and the entire world. He has blessed Zambia with a strong Christian heritage, but heritage alone is not enough. The heritage should be actualized and extended to fulfill his purpose. You must become Christ centered leaders who make impacts on your communities, country, continent as well as the whole world.

Yes, you are called by God to do this special work. God already declares your unique identity in 1 Peter 2:9 saying, you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

As the light of the world and salt of the earth, you need to shine the light of God to others. Jesus commands you in Matthew 5:16, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

My question: Are you ready to do this special task? Do you hear the voice of God who calls you now? Are you perceiving the power of miracle that God is working now in Zambia?

My question to teachers: Are you ready?

If you are ready, then how to implement this critical task? How to be ready to answer God's calling for you? How could you conduct this task? You need to be equipped with Godly character and servant leadership skills and competencies.

About 15 years ago, I was invited to a Christian conference in Thailand, to teach the Christian leadership skills and competencies to the church leaders in East Asia. In order to prepare the presentation, I read the Bible carefully to find out the key skills and competencies that Jesus demonstrated in the Bible. The final output of my research was called the GREAT leadership in which Jesus demonstrated five key skills/competencies, summarizing with the acronym GREAT. In order to implement God's special task on each Christian, you need to be equipped with five key competencies, which I call GREAT. Christians should be Gentle, Relational, Envisioning, Active and Transformational.

First, you need to be gentle because gentleness is the key character of Jesus. Jesus touches and engages with all people with gentleness. Even God, he willingly became a human being and took the cross silently. He calls himself, I am gentle. His servanthood gentleness saved us from sin. God's kingdom is not defined by power, authority, status, position. God asks us to imitate his character to implement the new task that has given us. How would you demonstrate the love of God to others? By serving them, by demonstrating gentleness, by displaying servanthood leadership.

Our culture encourages us to be aggressive, ambitious, practicing their power and authority, and being a prideful person; the world ignores and disdains humbleness/gentleness. However, the bible proves that only gentleness can make a difference. We need to practice gentleness and humbleness in every aspect of our lives.

Jesus showed a totally different style of leadership, demonstrating a humble servant even though he is God's creator, dying on the cross to save all your/my sins on the cross. Yes, we need to be a gentle leader. Paul recommends us "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near (Philippians 4:5). Please be gentle. This is the way to make a positive impact on others.

Second, you need to be relational. God asks us to always work cooperatively. In the Bible, ministry is rarely entrusted to just one person working alone. God said that it was not good for man to be alone. In which he created his helper and lived together. God is relational as well, demonstrating a perfect harmony among three persons. Jesus perfectly showed the model of a team ministry. He always worked with his 12 disciples, and discussed key agenda with three core ministry members (Peter, James and John). He sent his disciples out two by two. One of the famous African proverbs is: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. This is exactly the biblical concepts in Ecclesiastes 4:12 which read, though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

The Bible mentioned many cases to work together, for ex., Moses and Aaron; David and Nathan; Jeremiah and Baruch; Paul and Barnabas; Peter and John; That's why Paul mentioned 59 times one another/each other such as love one another, accept one another, bear with each other, build each other, encourage one another. Why? We are relational beings. Listen! God wants to work with us. We are God's partners. Jesus taught us, your kingdom come, which means we are working together to bring his kingdom down on earth. As one of 7 habits says, seek to understand others before you are understood, seek synergy, seek win-win approach in your lives. Yes you need to be relational.

Thirdly, you need to be an envisioning Christian. There are many misunderstandings about the word 'vision' in the Bible. When we see the word vision, we usually think about the future goals, or some dreams that will be fulfilled sometime soon. People say my vision is to buy a nice car. Or my vision is to become a millionaire. However, the biblical meaning of the word vision is totally different. In the

Hebrew word, 'Harzon,' which refers to a divine revelation, or God's communication or heavenly message. For ex., proverbs 29:18 says where there is no vision (revelation), the people perish; or in those days the word of the Lord was rare, there were not many visions (1 Sam 3:1), Paul even says, "I was not obedient to the vision from heaven (Acts 26:19). God wants all of us to be visionaries, to be equipped with his vision. Is this possible? Yes, because God promised us the outpouring of the vision to all of us. See Joel 2:28-29. I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophecy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit. (Joel 2:28-29).

Remember that the vision comes only from God who places it in your heart. So, ask God to show his vision like Samuel asked him, saying 'speak Lord, your servant is listening (1 Sam 3:10). God promised you to answer when you ask. Jeremiah 33:3 says, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

The persons with vision and without it live very differently. The person with vision is confident, focused and energetic, knowing what direction he should go, concentrating on it in spite of challenges and difficulties. However, the person without vision is confused, unmotivated, and lacks direction. Do you know the life of Israelites when they were out of Egypt? When they had a vision, they were all focused to go to the promised land. However, after listening to 12 spies' report that they can't conquer the land, they lost their vision. The next 38 years showed the typical example of the person without a vision. They just survived and died until a new vision came through Joshua. Do you have a vision from God?

The next leadership competency is Active. God calls us to be active doers, not just speakers or thinkers only. Yes, faith is something that we exercise every day in our lives. James 2:17 says, faith by itself if it does not have works is dead. Real faith is active faith. Real faith is more than just I say; more than an emotion I feel; more than an idea I debate; and more than a truth I believe. That's why Jesus rebuked Pharisees, Sadducees and teachers of the law because of their hypostatical lifestyles. They only talk, but not do what they say. We need to be doers. In fact, love is action oriented. Love always generates positive action toward another. In love there is always the act of doing. Think about the life of Jesus who was so busy every day during his earthly ministry. Mark 6:31 says, "Then because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat..."

Yes, we need to work hard; Ephesians 5:16, make good use of every opportunity you have because these are evil days. The master (God) commended servants who work so hard, saying 'good and faithful servants,' while he condemned the lazy servant who didn't work. The world is the place to work. There is no retirement as long as we live. Take a rest in heaven. Work hard. Be an active Christian.

Finally Christians should be transformational. Your life goal is to maximize your influence, by changing and transforming your contexts, your communities and your mission fields that God assigned you. I say again, your life goal is to influence others. God asks you to influence every aspect of society. In order to maximize your influence, you don't need to be a pastor, church minister or full time missionaries like Paul. Status, position, title is not important, but your heart, passion and commitment always matter to God.

Every Christian is God's chosen to make a positive impact on others and communities. Your community, your family, your friends need you now. Do whatever God asks you to do. Transformation begins with

small things you have. Think about the boy who brought his lunch to Jesus when he taught 5,000. A lunch with five loaves of bread and two fish. When the boy gave his small lunch bento box, he transformed the whole community. You don't need a huge plan, platform or a massive thing. Do not find other things, other resources, or different materials that you do not have now. God asks you to use what you have now to transform the situation you encounter now.

Exodus 4:2 (then the Lord said to him, what is that in your hand? a staff, he replied.)

What is it in your hand? The staff is the symbol of his identity as a shepherd, a symbol of his profession and his income. God asks Moses to make influence where he is now and what he has. Before he met God, the staff was a normal material for his work as a shepherd. However, after he met God, the staff is a tool for God's miracle. When he touches the Nile with the staff, it turns in the blood; when he points to the sky, all plagues are coming into Egypt; when he strikes the rock, the water gushes out; when the red sea was touched by the staff, the sea parted. Moses was the agent of God's transformative power.

What do you have now? Are you willing to give the small things you have to God? When you give the small things you have now, God will use it to make a miracle.

Let me summarize the GREAT model. Do you want to be God's servant? You need to be gentle. You need to be relational, you need to be envisioning; active and transformational.

God calls you now. Listen to his voice to come to him. When God calls you, you may take a several ways of responding:

Like Moses, you may be hesitant to accept it fully. God I'm not competent yet. I can't speak well.

Like Jeremiah, you may reject his offer because you think you are not ready. God I'm too young, I am only a child. I'm too old, I'm too poor, I'm too busy now, I'm too tired...

Like Jonah, you may think God is wrong, unjust, not right, and run away from God.

But Isaiah is right. He said, "Yes God. I'm ready. Send me now."

God is calling you now. God has a wonderful plan for Zambia, your country. He needs servants to partner in his work. As Jesus said, it is harvest time, He needs workers.

Are you ready? Are you ready to do his job? Are you willing to be his servant now?

Can you raise your hands to accept God's invitation now? Yes, God I am ready now. Whatever you ask me to do, I will obey your calling. If so, come forward to this podium. Our university teachers will pray for you. Do not see others. This is just between you and God, your heavenly father.

Let's pray together

Raise up a new generation

Use Zambia as a blessing to Africa and the nations

Vision into action for all students, young generations of Breath of Heaven.