

FIRE IN HIS BONES (A SUMMARY)

March 8, 2013 at 10:25am

INTRODUCTION: Fire in His Bones is a compelling book by Ruthanne Garlock on the life and times of Benson Idahosa. A careful study of the book will provide a good picture of the following:

1. His Birth and growing up years,
2. His new birth experience and passion for the gospel,
3. His phenomenal vision and start off of his ministry,
4. His relationship, marriage and family
5. His mentors and training,
6. The oppositions he faced and
7. His great ministry testimonies.

HIS BIRTH AND GROWING UP YEARS: As a little child, his father ordered his mother to throw him away because of his sickly health. He often fainted and was lifeless for a while. On the night his mother painfully and reluctantly dropped him on the rubbish heap lifeless, she stayed close by and wept bitterly as it rained heavily. All of a sudden there was a thunderous lightening that struck and to her greatest joy, little Benson began to cry: he was alive again! Despite her husband's threat to disown her if she didn't throw away this child, she took him with her and pledged to nurse and take care of him. She eventually left her husband house with little Benson, leaving her other children behind and went to her village to live with her parents. There she took care of Benson and nurtured him. A phenomenal trait as he grew up was his great love and passion for education. It wasn't too long before he was sent to work on a farm with his father's brother – Uncle Joseph. Though he wasn't given the chance to go to school, he eagerly sat side by side his cousins while they did their home works and he asked questions and learnt very fast from them. Very soon he was so brilliant that when they had quiz among themselves the other children contested for who will come closest to Benson in their scores. With no shoes of his own he was once promised a singlet by his uncle as an end of year celebration gift if he did his farm work well. Somehow his uncle always had a reason to not give that singlet to him while he bought suits, shirts and shoes every year for his own children.

Benson wasn't so worried about not getting a singlet. He was more focused on not missing his time of study with the other children. Benson was very hardworking and diligent. He worked tirelessly and diligently on the farm and at home for his mother or uncle's wives. While living with his grandfather in Benin he began a correspondence course in business and accounting but could not continue for lack of money. Because of this his grandfather took him to a Bata shoe company in Benin to get a job as an assistant store clerk. Getting the job was a miracle. On the job he worked so hard that he was continually being praised and promoted.

HIS NEW BIRTH EXPERIENCE AND PASSION FOR THE GOSPEL: While staying with his grandfather in Benin he used to play football with his friends. One day they heard the sound of some Christians in a church close by. They decided to play the football through the church window to hit the pastor from behind. Benson was in charge of kicking the ball in. After several failed attempts they came closer and closer to the building and Benson with a lot of strength kicked the ball so hard that it hit the wall again but this time bounced back very hard at his chest. He was down on the floor and couldn't breathe. His chest was swollen. He was eventually rushed into the church. The pastor of the church – Pastor Okpo prayed for him and he recovered. The swelling on his chest went down. Benson was so amazed by the power of God that manifested through this pastor. He knew for a certainty that the God that this pastor served was real, unlike the juju that his parents and family believed in and worshipped. Benson had always told his mum that he didn't believe their gods had the power to protect them. Pastor Okpo ministered to him and eventually led him to Christ. When Benson Idahosa became born again he had peace and he was not the same again. He began to attend Pastor Okpo's church where he heard the gospel and began to learn God's ways. Now that he was born again his passion for knowledge increased. He wanted to know God with all his heart. He also had a very strong desire to spread this good news about the saving power of Jesus Christ. He no longer played football with his friends. He went to church instead. He was the only Bini person in that church as all others were Igbo. His friends used that to discourage him from attending the church but he did not give in. Through him many Binis began to get saved and attend the church. Benson began going on evangelical outreaches with some other believers to nearby villages and towns to preach the gospel. He finally had the opportunity to witness to his mum and after much hesitation she one day accepted Jesus into her heart. He eventually witnessed to his father but his father did not accept Christ. He was the juju priest of the family. Though he saw the changes in Benson's life and felt he had found something real, he hesitated and didn't have a chance to become



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HIS PHENOMENAL VISION AND START OFF OF HIS MINISTRY: As he slept one night he was suddenly awakened by a voice. He sat up and listened as God spoke to him. That night he heard God call him and instruct him to preach the gospel. The Lord also promised to confirm his message with signs following. The next night Benson had a vision where he saw himself standing under a tree. The tree was empty and dried from its roots; it had no leaves. He stood under the tress as instructed by God and the Lord also told him that someone would come and ask him for help.

Shortly, he saw an old woman carrying a heavy load. The Lord instructed him to go and help her. He approached the woman and asked if he could help her. She agreed and told him that she had passed so many people on the way but no one wanted to help her. As he helped her bring her load down to rest under the tree, immediately a fresh green leaf appeared on the tree. He later saw two elderly men coming with heavy loads. Once again he asked if he could help them and they agreed. As they got safely under the tree, two fresh green leaves appeared on the tree's branch. He kept on doing this until there were about a hundred people under the tree. After a while he became exhausted and the Lord instructed him to look among the people with him for young men who would join him to help people take down their loads and burdens. As the young men joined him, more passersby where helped and the tree had become densely covered with leaves. The Lord then spoke to him that this was what He the Lord will do with his life. As he helped people drop their load at God's feet, God will bring back to life that which was dead. God also told him that he would stand before great multitudes and declare God's power to heal and perform miracles. After waking up from the vision, Benson continued to go from place to place declaring the saving power of Jesus to all he could reach. More and more people responded to his messages. Benson later moved to an area in Benin where there was no Full Gospel

Search and teach  Akinola covers the word of God. He found a store on Forestry Road which he rented and began to use for church meetings. He still worked at the Bata shoe company but he saw his responsibility of preaching and teaching as his primary job. The lives of the believers were getting blessed and their numbers increased greatly.

HIS RELATIONSHIP, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY: Shortly after Benson's conversion he was introduced to a special young lady called Margaret Izevbogie. She was the only child of her parents and was on holidays from boarding school. Benson preached to her and her friends but they didn't accept Jesus into their lives but made fun of him calling him little pastor. Benson and Margaret became very close as Margaret seemed to like him very much. Benson told Margaret that he was going to be a brother to her and he was going to protect her. Sometime later, Benson visited her house one day and found everybody crying. Her uncle's daughter had just passed on after being very sick. God used Benson to miraculously raise the child back to life. Margaret was touched in her heart and convinced that Benson's God was real. She was sorry for not taking him serious all this while. While in her room that night she prayed and accepted Jesus into her life. She began attending church services in Pastor Okpo's church by Benson's invitation. Benson later asked Margaret to marry him and Margaret was upset. She felt he had planned it all along. She saw him as a brother and she was afraid of being a pastor's wife. She later agreed and the two of them got married on April 6th, 1969. Margaret was a very loving wife and she was very worried that her husband was so busy with the ministry that he sometimes couldn't eat. As she worked with Benson her passion and grace for the ministry grew. She was a great support and blessing to Benson and the ministry. She attended programs and conferences from where God placed great visions and dreams in her heart. After returning from one of such meetings she began the Christian Women Fellowship International. God blessed them with a son and three daughters.

HIS MENTORS AND TRAINING: The Lord spoke to Benson one day about a man he had never met call Elton in Ilesha, Nigeria. The Lord told him to go and see this man. At this time Benson's ministry had been increasing and expanding but with great opposition and challenges. He was in need of a counselor and advisor. In obedience to God's voice, Benson went to Ilesha with an elder of his church and miraculously found Brother Elton who was expecting him. Brother Elton was a great source of fatherly encouragement to Benson and the church. They scheduled periodic meetings where Elton came to them in Benin and they would also go to him in Ilesha from time to time.

When Benson informed Elton of the roofing need of their new church building, Elton promised to raise funds for the church by contacting Gordon Lindsay, the head of a missions organization in America that usually assisted churches like Benson's. Gordon Lindsay later visited Nigeria and they both came to Benson's church. During the service they perceived God's leading to ordain Benson fully into the ministry for a great work in Nigeria, so they called him out and they both laid hands on him and ordained him. To Benson this was like the double portion anointing of Elijah's mantle.

The next day Gordon Lindsay invited Benson over to America and offered him a scholarship in the Bible training school of Christ For The Nations. At this time Benson was still a staff of Bata Shoe company and he was granted leave to travel for his training. He told the elders to take care of the church in his absence. Over in America he was well received into the Bible



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people. He took his notes and lectures very seriously. He also wrote a lot of letters especially to encourage his wife Margaret who he left in Nigeria. While in the bible school he read a book by T. L. Osborn: *"Soul winning: Out where the Sinners Are"*. In the book, he saw the statistics of how the population of the world was increasing rapidly but the gospel wasn't spreading well and fast enough. This message struck his heart greatly. He often fasted and wept over the message of this book. More than ever before the need to preach the gospel to his people weighed heavily on his heart. It burnt in him like fire in his bones. He could no longer stand being in school while his people were perishing. He explained to 'Dad' Lindsay who perfectly understood him and allowed him return to Nigeria. He received so many gifts as he was leaving that he was asked to pay for extra luggage at the airport.

He spoke to the manager of the airport and the extra charge was waved off. He was also exempted from paying the customs charges in Nigeria. On his return, the power of God began to move mightily through him. Right from the airport, as members of the church came to welcome him, people that shook his hands were slain by the power of God right there at the tarmac. This was just the beginning.

THE OPPOSITIONS HE FACED: Benson's life and ministry was faced with a lot of opposition and criticism. Once when he had to travel out of Benin for a while he put an elder in charge of the church. He was informed later that the elder had been made the head of the church removing him completely. He returned and did not make any trouble. He believed that if his time was over in that church then God had another plan for him. One by one, all those who were part of that conspiracy went down either with sickness, death or loss of their family members. The elder who took his place initially later relocated to another town. God vindicated him. When he began a new building in a bigger land, some elders went and removed the foundation stones claiming his desire to build a 500 person capacity hall was outrageous. They wanted him to build a 50 person capacity hall. When he returned from the Bible school in America God's power flowed mightily through him and great crowds flooded Benson's church which now had various branches around Benin and Nigeria. This made many pastors very angry with him and they blamed him for stealing their members. In a meeting that they convened and invited Benson to, they ordered him to return their members to their churches. To this he said he did not need to tell any sheep where to go as all he did was to grow grass and the sheep came. A journalist that was among the pastors threatened to write stories about him that would destroy him and his ministry. He went ahead with those stories but the stories made people come to see if they were true and by the power of God that they saw they were saved and joined the church also. When he was to start airing his programme Redemption Hour on national television the woman in charge at the station said that it would not be aired even over her dead body. Benson told her that she would be alive to see the program on air. Shortly after this encounter she was removed from her position in the station due to fraudulent practices and the new person that took her position permitted the programme to come on air. When he was to build a branch known as Miracle Centre, at Airport Road Benin, the head of the military hospital that was close by wanted to resist him claiming that the noise from his church would disturb his patients. Benson told him that the noise from the airplanes were far more than what may come from his church and that nothing was going to stop him from building the church. Miracle Centre was the largest branch at that time. Much later the government wanted to demolish the structure to enable them expand the airport. Benson went on air and declared that no one could destroy what God had built. The government later altered their plan and many other buildings were demolished but Miracle Center was left untouched.

HIS GREAT MINISTRY TESTIMONIES: When Benson returned from the Bible School, the testimonies that met his new passion and zeal were outstanding. He organized outreach crusades both within and outside Nigeria. These crusades had great crowds and awesome manifestations of God's power. He used stadiums and venues that had never been used for such programmes and gathered crowds that had never been gathered before. There were healings and miracles that were great and phenomenal. Some people even got healed on their way home after his crusades. He caused a great spiritual revolution in countries like Australia, Zaire, Kenya, Ghana, Togo and Liberia. Government officials and dignitaries often attended his crusades. He later began a Bible School: All Nations for Christ Bible Institute that attracted students from all over the world to be trained for missions and world evangelism. He began a very successful TV ministry programme called: Redemption Hour and via this medium he reached about 50 million people every week. This was the first of its kind in all of Africa. The zeal and passion grew and spread to millions around the world. He practically reached and touched the world by God's greater power within him.

CONCLUSION: From the analysis of his life as stated in this book it is evident that Benson Idahosa was a man of great zeal and passion for God and the salvation of souls by the gospel. He was a man of faith. He was a man of prayer. He heard and heeded to God's voice. He was very hard working and his passion for knowledge was outstanding. He was humble and knew when to seek for advice and counsel. He liked to mobilize and work with people because he knew that the work was enormous. He showed great boldness and wisdom in handling criticism and opposition. He was a great father, husband and leader.



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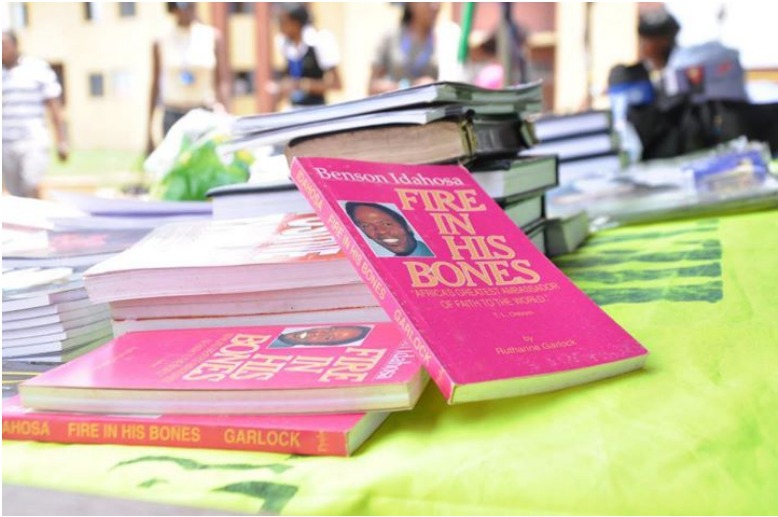
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