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From Bush Country to Pulpit

Our Classics

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A pioneer of the Apostolic Faith work in Zimbabwe recounts how he was miraculously led to the truth.

Slowly I trudged away from my home one morning, blankets over my shoulders, with my parents behind me in the home yard shouting, “Go away, go away! The way you worship is not the way we taught you! Go away!” My heart was heavy as I walked past the cattle corral and out into the bush—away from all the things of home that were so dear to me.

There in the bush the devil met me and we went into a resounding battle. He said, “See now, are you a Christian? The Bible says that you must obey your parents, but you do not obey them at all. When they told you to leave your way of praying and accept theirs, you did not. Now they have chased you away from home. God has also left you. You had better end it all, and hang yourself.” Satan even showed me the tree on which I was to end my life. But I stood up against that old devil and said, “Get away! I am not here for you, devil; I am here for Jesus.” And he finally had to leave.

That was a major crisis in my Christian life. But thank God, He helped me through, as He had helped me many times before in my life.

From the time I was a small boy, my parents were regular churchgoers and the Bible was an open Book in our home. I remember sitting in church and my heart would melt as I heard the Word of God preached. I even carried my Bible with me when I took the cattle out to pasture. I loved the first part of the school day because it was set aside for a Scripture lesson. Although I read chapter after chapter, it seemed my hunger for the Word of God was never satisfied.

As I grew older, things changed. As soon as I started working to make a living in the big city, I lost the desire for the things of God. I wanted to find happiness and I sought for it in every avenue. Somehow, though, I could never lose my fear of Hell. I knew that Hell was real! How to stop that truth from haunting me was a problem I could not solve.

Eventually, I got into real trouble and was arrested and imprisoned for three weeks. After being released, I was ashamed to meet my friends and relatives. I felt they would brand me a thief forever, so I decided to leave my country of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). I walked past forests and lanes, across rivers and over mountains—over three hundred miles on foot—heading for South Africa. En route I became sick unto death, but a minister of some church prayed for me and God healed me.

I realized anew that God was working in my life, and I decided to follow Christ again. But this was a mere mental acceptance of Christ; and though in time I became a minister of a church, there was no power in my life to keep me, and I fell into sin once more. However, my heart was still hungry. One day as I was praying earnestly, God answered the cry of my heart, forgave my sins, and showed me my life could be built upon the Rock Christ Jesus. Peace came in and fear vanished. Faith filled my heart and joy started flowing.

From that time on, the desire to tell others of what God had done for me grew limitlessly. Each time I read my Bible I heard Jesus say, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). I went back home, and there I organized prayer meetings, gathering people together every evening to tell them of the wonderful love of Jesus. It was those meetings which caused the members of my own family to turn against me. They said I was annoying and interrupting the teachings of their church. They accused me of praying too much, worrying them by testifying to them, and seeing myself as more righteous than they. So I found myself turned away from my own home.

However, that morning as I walked out into the bush, I knew God would not leave me. And He did not! He led me to some people who were praying, and I stayed with them for three years. I met and married my wife, and she too is a born-again Christian.

One of the first things Reverend Oshokoya said to me when we met was, “You seem to have been saved for years, but do you understand what sanctification is? Have you been sanctified?”

The call of God was strong on my life, and I hungered to be closer to Him. In a wonderful way God led me to Bulawayo, Rhodesia. I received a letter from the Apostolic Faith in Portland, Oregon, saying that a Reverend Timothy Oshokoya was coming to Rhodesia and I was invited to meet him and help as an interpreter. One of the first things Reverend Oshokoya said to me when we met was, "You seem to have been saved for years, but do you understand what sanctification is? Have you been sanctified?"

Tears rolled down my cheeks as I tried to answer, and the Spirit of God spoke right into my heart and said, "This is what you have been hungering for since you were saved. Take it! Take it!" Reverend Oshokoya fully explained the second work of grace to me. I listened, and then went to pray in the bush and at home. God sanctified me, and later filled me with the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.

Before Reverend Oshokoya left Bulawayo, he talked to me about preaching the Gospel there. A short time later, early in the morning, my wife and I left our home, which was one hundred miles from Bulawayo. We traveled on foot without a penny in our pockets. We were heading for that city where God had a work for us to do.

I was carrying a trunk with a few belongings in it and my wife was carrying Freedom, our son. (We had named him Freedom in commemoration of our being liberated from the bondage of sin.) We trudged along those slow miles without a single person to look to for support. But the God of Heaven was watching out for us. A car pulled to a halt behind us. Out of it stepped a white missionary who said, "I am sent to you by God. I will take you to Bulawayo. God spoke to me about you as I lay in bed."

For much of the time when we first arrived in Bulawayo, we had no place to stay so we lived in the bush. I approached the authorities for permission to preach the Gospel, and for three months I struggled with them because they wanted me to produce a theological diploma, which I did not have. At long last, they gave me permission, and though I did not have a house, at least the first problem was solved. Since I was not employed, I had no funds. We prayed about this out there in the bush, and one day a miraculous Voice said to me, "Go to Fourth Street." A lady came from a church where she had been praying and gave me some money. She said God had told her to meet me and give me this money, for I was in need of it. This provided food for our son in the bush.

We continued in prayer, asking God for accommodations where we could live and hold meetings. The Voice came again with instructions—once more I was to go and walk along Fourth Street. This time a man met me, and gave me the exact amount needed to pay the deposit charge for a place where we could hold services.

The Gospel was first preached to one person, then to two and three. The figures mounted and the work grew day by day. Converts came in ever-increasing numbers. There was a light in our hearts as we remembered there was a people who preached a pure doctrine, that of sanctification, which was one of the themes of our sermons. Through God's help and guidance we became a part of the Apostolic Faith of Portland, Oregon, the church whose representative, Reverend Oshokoya, had first explained to me the experience of sanctification.

Among those saved were my mother and other members of my family. As news went out that God had brought a great revival to Bulawayo, calls and invitations to hold services came from all over the country. Hungry hearts were anxious to learn more of God in many locations, and eventually branch churches were begun here and there. We now have branch churches in Zambia and Malawi as well.

Truly we can see that God can produce something out of nothing, for this work has grown from a lone little family in the bush to the salvation of thousands of souls. This is what God can do!