

# Getting Started Moving in His Direction



I was in Italy working with a vibrant youth evangelistic group when a very special opportunity arose to go to Africa. It was sort of an emergency situation as there was a need since the couples that were staffing the outpost were experiencing visa trouble and would have to leave in a matter of a few weeks. With the setup that they had it would almost amount to having to close up shop and having to re-pioneer the same area later on in the future. They didn't believe that that was God's highest will so they requested help.

In Italy most people seemed to look on me, being of the darker persuasion (regarding skin-type), a little differently, however when sharing about Jesus, their attitude changed quite a bit, at least for most people. Now, because of being darker, that was one of the main reasons besides being available, for me being asked if I wanted to be a part of the small team to replace and "to stand in the gap" (Ezekiel 22:30)

I prayed about it and Jesus said to go. Initially there was the need to raise finances to cover plane fare and expenses. Since I was basically no good at it, I was praying for God to miraculously supply as I was going to have to raise my support. In this case, because of the urgency, the missionaries sponsored me and paid my fare, thank the Lord!

We were invited, the first team were invited as one of the villagers had been in Europe before and had heard of the



progress and results from those who lives had been changed and challenged to give their lives to Jesus and they saw this as a possibility for others in the village.,

Well, first impressions, upon leaving the air-conned plane I was met with a stifling humidity that felt like being smothered by a thick pillow or thick cotton wad over my face! It took a little while to get used to breathing as it was very, very humid!

We traveled by, well I don't really remember if we went by road or by plane, as it has been so long. However, I do remember getting to the village and the house-a one story bungalow which was shared with a local native couple who had a baby boy. After the long trip I was really thirsty as we were driving and didn't have a lot of water. So, it was a bit of a shock and surprise when having to boil river water and



wait for it to cool off and drink it. We had no fridge or cold water and that was a bit of a shock.

However, the bigger shock was when meeting "the students", the congregation who wanted to give their lives to Christ-they were a big group-mostly older people, simple villagers. Upon meeting their pastors and the main organizer it became apparent that they were not exactly 100% genuine about their motives. Basically, we were viewed as a "meal ticket"-as they were used to missionaries who were sponsored by big churches in the West. As such, they would be able to sponsor the pastors with a monthly salary.



This took a little getting used to as I was used to reaching people who had a need-wanting Jesus' help and working on reading His Word and desiring to put it into

practice in their personal lives as best they could. My hopes and vision were quite dimmed with the attitude of the pastors who seemed to be in it for the money, not **The Man**, Christ Jesus!

It took a while to get beyond the dismay, as if the pastors had that attitude, then what about the congregations? Well, when you start on your journey with Christ, you quickly find out that God has many varied ways of getting us started and getting us moving in His Direction! He helped me to see that we, I, just had to be faithful to share His Word and it was His job to do the work and accomplish His Will via this open door that He provided. I had to have a great adjustment, like a chiropractor having to make “adjustments” to improve your posture or health.

It took a while to make it, and as I changed my attitude and prayed more “I got to see God fulfill His Will in this situation that He’d placed me in” then got to see how there were people who were responding to Jesus and making progress in their spiritual lives! Then they wanted us to share it with their children and teen-agers! It was a major lesson on being faithful to Jesus and also to look at Jesus and not the situation or conditions. *Philippians 1:6-“Being confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.”*

A lot of my ministry up to that time was in the area of personal witnessing-leading others to Christ and teaching them how to be responsible for their own personal feeding and relationship with Jesus. If they decided to also go to church or fellowship then that would be an additional plus. If somehow they were cut off from that, then they would know how to seek and obtain their spiritual food themselves as well as know how to reach and lead others to Christ as well! These congregations did make a lot of progress and after time Jesus did show that there was good fruit as a result as some witnessed to others in the nearby villages.

As a result of the faithfulness in that area, Jesus sent special individuals to us, while also helping us to learn the basis of the culture, since being exposed to and living



the village life which included collecting water from the stream for drinking, water from the rain for cleaning, and sometimes water from the river for washing and cleaning during the dry season.

The major lessons were on learning to be faithful to

Jesus, to feed His sheep, even if it looks like the people have nothing to give Jesus or to be able to do anything for Him or not, to trust Jesus, to trust that His Word will bring forth the fruit in other’s hearts, to trust God for His Plan and not run away from it just because I can’t see what He’s doing. “My ways are not your ways, neither are your thoughts My thoughts, saith the Lord.” (Isaiah 55:8-11)

We have a lot of challenges in our lives of service to Jesus. Most of the battles we face are and will be in our attitudes and in our minds. That’s why His Word and the daily washing of our minds by His Words is so important! “Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, by the washing of the water of the word!” (Romans 12:1, 2)



## Stephen in the Village

Another situation occurred when a doctrinal dispute arose and though it was not a point that affected one’s salvation or sharing the gospel of Christ, there was a division. “So there was a division among the people because of Him” John 7:43.

At the same time, we were very short on funds, and when the funds were held up, it was used by Jesus to show where some people’s hearts were at. This “double-whammy” caused some to say it was God showing He was displeased with us and caused them to speak bad about us and our ministry. While with others it caused Jesus’ light and love to be made manifested. One man in particular was Stephen. He was Christian and though He didn’t understand the fuss, or maybe even didn’t agree with our opinion, He showed Christ’s love with us, shared His food with us, invited us over to His house and shared what he could with us and as well was rebuffed by others in the village who spoke evil of us. Stephen reminded them of the sacrifices we’d made to come to their country and village to share God’s love with them. He sort of became an outcast as others called him names as well. He didn’t mind it as He saw that Jesus was with us. I always admired him and the stand he took for Jesus and for us-as well as the sample of love he was to us.

“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.” Love shall cover a multitude of sins-His love, our sins. John 13:34,35  
I Peter 4:8