

TESTIMONY

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I come from the land of the great sunshine of Africa, the land which historians gave the name, rather wrongly, of the dark continent. We have plenty of sunshine, but we have not received the "sonshine" of Jesus Christ.

I want to give the glory to him because he acted graciously in my life. I was born in a traditional non-Christian African home. My parents had never heard about Jesus Christ but my father was a very religious man. He worshiped God through the agents of the spirits of our dead ancestors. He was seeking after God like most Africans do. He was groping after him because we believe that the security of everything depends on him. Oh, but what a terrible thing when a seeker fails to find that which he is seeking for. I was raised under that atmosphere. Being the firstborn, my father introduced me into this worship very early. He taught me by example. He took me to the worship. We sacrificed together. And yet we never found that god. He remained a distant god — someone too far to help you when you need him. That is where I grew; seeking, never finding; thirsty, but without water; afraid, but without the truth.

Then light came through missionaries, and I want to praise God this afternoon for sending missionaries to Africa. I am not afraid to say that I am the product of missionaries. Bless them! They were compelled by the love of God from Germany, from Switzerland, from Britain, from all over, from America and they wanted to share the message with those for whom Christ died. The missionary who introduced me to the light of the Gospel was a black man so I came in contact with Christianity through a black face. I entered knowing but without actually finding. I knew about Jesus; I read about him; I appreciated his ethics, but I never met him. The living Christ of the New Testament I had not yet found. My knowledge increased my guilt. After eighteen years in Christianity, I became tired of Christianity, I became tired of missionaries, I became tired of church tradition because there was an area which needed to believe in Jesus Christ and it had not yet been touched.

Then there was an afternoon I shall never forget. You see, I came from the land of groping and I entered the land of knowing without finding. And it was during that time that I nearly committed suicide because of frustration. I had a good job, I was a young teacher, politically minded. But on this particular Sunday afternoon (and during that time, I was an agnostic) I was coming from a drinking party on a bicycle and I met a young African, a friend of mine, and he confronted me with a fresh experience of meeting Jesus Christ and it shook me. This young African was real; there was joy in his eyes. I felt he was alive and he told me why. "Jesus has come my way. My sins are forgiven," he said. Then he said, "I love you." We were on the road, not in a church because I no longer went to church those days. I went to my house after I visited him. I exposed my poor life to the love of God in Jesus Christ. I spoke from suffering. I presented my emptiness to the love which took Jesus to Calvary and in his

amazing grace, I don't know how, he entered into the heart of that enemy. He was not afraid of confusion. He entered in, realistically. He spoke and I understood. He touched my wounds. He lifted my burdens. He forgave my sins. He liberated me. I got off my knees. I ran, I jumped, I got excited! And I want to tell every African about it. I am an Anglican Bishop and we Anglican Bishops don't usually get excited. We are as careful as the Swiss people.

But now since he met me, I become excited because Jesus is wonderful and when he had liberated me, he sent me to an African whom I hated so that we might be reconciled. He was not a Christian but when I asked him to forgive me, he put his arms around me, and he who was my enemy became my friend. Then I went to another man, this time it was an English man. I had hated him. He was fifty miles away and the Lord said, "You hated that man, but I love him, and he's your brother." I protested, "How can he be my brother? He's white (or rather, he's pink) and I am black (if you like, I'm chocolate). How can he be my brother? He speaks English and I speak my mother tongue." Jesus said, "He's your brother. I died for him. I died for you. You hated your brother. Go to him. Cycle the fifty miles. Go to that man. Ask him to forgive you and tell him you love him." I went to his house. I found him there. I put my arms around him. I said, "I'm sorry. I hated you but now I'm free and I'm no longer suffering from the disease of hate. I love you. You're my brother." My, I was liberated! I left his house as if I had wings to fly.

Do you want to fly this evening? Welcome Jesus into your heart and life can never be the same.