

*Prayer of an
African Preacher*



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On Sunday, November 14, 2010 Michael Loua was executed in Guinea, West Africa. He had come to the United States years earlier where he studied the Bible and then he returned to Guinea, West Africa to preach the gospel. He was imprisoned for his faith and then finally he was executed, becoming a modern-day martyr for the faith. We may not agree with all of his theology, but we certainly cannot question his dedication. This is his prayer.

What impact does the attitude of 'each day being a gift' have on a person? Perhaps it differs with each individual - but here is the prayer of an African preacher who was later killed for his faith. Read it, memorize it, speak it and live it. Instead of a New Year's resolution, make it a

New Year's 'prayer solution.' May Christ give us the grace to have it profoundly affect the way our own life unfolds:

I'm a part of the fellowship of the unashamed. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of His and I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed. My present makes sense. My future is secure. I'm done and finished with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap living, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position,

worship the [Lord].
2' Judge the sla[ve] and the wid[ow] / Judge the orph[an]
3' [and] the stranger. [P]lead for the infant / plead for the po[or and]
4' the widow. Rehabilitate [the poor] at the hands of the king.
5' Protect the po[or and] the slave / [supp]ort the stranger.

- The contents of the text express social sensitivity to the fragile position of weaker members of society.
 - The inscription testifies to the presence of strangers within the Israeli society as far back as this ancient period, and calls to provide support for these strangers.
 - It appeals to people to care for the widows and orphans and that the king, who at that time had the responsibility of curbing social inequality, be involved.
- This inscription is similar in its content to other biblical scriptures, such as Isaiah 1:17, Psalms 72:3 and Exodus 23:3, but it is clear that it is not copied from any biblical text.

Compuserve What's New
4/4/2010

LIFE IS A GIFT FROM GOD

1. Today before you think of saying an unkind word - Think of someone who can't speak.
2. Before you complain about the taste of your food - Think of someone who has nothing to eat.
3. Before you complain about your husband or wife - Think of someone who's crying out to God for a companion.
4. Today before you complain about life - Think of someone who went too early to heaven.
5. Before you complain about your children - Think of someone who desires children but they're barren.
6. Before you argue about your dirty house, someone didn't clean or sweep - Think of the people who are living in the streets.
7. Before whining about the distance you drive - Think of someone who walks the same distance.
8. And when you are tired and complain about your job - Think of the unemployed, the disabled and those who wished they had your job.
9. But before you think of pointing the finger or condemning another - Remember that not one of us are without sin and we all answer to one maker.
10. And when depressing thoughts seem to get you down - Put a smile on your face and thank God you're alive and still around. Remember:

Life is a gift...Live it...Enjoy it...Celebrate it...and fulfill it; AND:

" Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

Hebrews 13:2

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A Stunning Discovery About the Bible

The Bible may be a lot older than we think. The most ancient Hebrew biblical inscription ever found has been deciphered, and experts say it means some parts of the Bible were written hundreds of years before the dates for which they are currently credited. The inscription was written in ink on a trapezoid pottery shard measuring about 6-inches square. Found in 2008 during excavations near the Elah valley in a provincial town near Judea, it dates to the 10th century B.C., which was the time of King David's reign. Not only does this small piece of pottery change the date of the Bible's composition, but also it sheds new light on the period in which the Old Testament was written.

Lead translator Gershon Galil of the University of Haifa in Israel calls the inscription on the pottery shard the earliest known Hebrew writing. Initially unsure about the language, Galil has now determined it is Hebrew, based on the use of verbs particular to

the Hebrew language, as well as content specific to Hebrew culture that was not adopted by any other cultures in the region.

"This text is a social statement, relating to slaves, widows and orphans," Galil says. "It uses verbs that were characteristic of Hebrew, such as *asah* ("did") and *avad* ("worked"), which were rarely used in other regional languages. Particular words that appear in the text, such as *almanah* ("widow") are specific to Hebrew and are written differently in other local languages. The content itself was also unfamiliar to all the cultures in the region besides the Hebrew society: The present inscription provides social elements similar to those found in the biblical prophecies and very different from prophecies written by other cultures postulating glorification of the gods and taking care of their physical needs."

This is what the text says:

I' you shall not do [it], but

promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, or first, or tops, or recognized, or praised, or rewarded. I live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by Holy Spirit power.

My face is set. My gait is fast. My goal is heaven. My road may be narrow, my way rough, my companions few, but my guide is reliable and my mission is clear.

I will not be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice or hesitate in the presence of the adversary. I will not negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, or let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and preached up for the cause of Christ.

I am a disciple of Jesus. I must give until I drop, preach until all know, and work until He comes. And

when He does come for His own, He'll have no problems recognizing me. My colors will be clear!

...Via email (and internet search)



The Pope's Car and Giving

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

An online casino, GoldenPalace.com, bought the Pope's car in an Internet auction for 189,000 euros (\$245,620.54). According to the story by the **Religious News Service**, a man named Benjamin Halbe, 21, only paid 9,500 euros when he bought the car from a dealer in Singen, Germany. He didn't even know it was the Pope's car until after he had purchased it. The metallic gray Volkswagen Golf sedan, with 75,000 kilometers (46,500 miles) on the odometer was believed to have been previously owned by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who became Pope Benedict XVI on April 19. An interesting fact contained in the story is that Mr. Ratzinger never drove the car. Nonetheless, it was a hot auction item that attracted a record 8.4 million visitors to the Web site. The auction occurred on a German Ebay site, and the story did not reveal how much Benjamin

Halbe profited on the deal. It stands to reason that Mr. Halbe made a nifty profit. I wonder what he will do with his money?

As I read this story I began to think about auctions and raffles. There are many charitable organizations that use auctions and raffles to raise funds. If by some stroke of luck an organization came into possession of a baseball with Mickey Mantle's autograph on it, they could probably make a hefty profit by raffling or auctioning it off. Collectors and museums could be enticed to lay out some significant capital to acquire such an item.

Can you imagine the early church auctioning off a pair of the Apostle Paul's sandals? They could really hype it up: "These are the very sandals he wore when he climbed Mars Hill and preached!" Or maybe we could find one of the Apostle Peter's robes raffled off in the city of Jerusalem!! We sure never hear of that happening in Scripture, and, to be quite honest, it is

Seeking Balance

For the past couple of years I have had inner ear problems that have caused me on many occasions to lose my equilibrium. Without warning something in my ear (fortunately not between the ears) gets out of line and I become dizzy. After seeking the help of doctors and many tests of the heart, carotid arteries, and various scans, it has been determined that I have something called "positional vertigo."

It seems as though nothing can compensate for the power of the inner ear when it comes to our balance. The doctor said, "It will be something you will just have to live with," which was not exactly what I wanted to hear! Isn't life itself like that? Something completely unexpected can upset what is our normal routine and we are knocked off balance. Maybe it was bad news from the boss about our job being eliminated. It could even be disturbing test results from our doctor, or any number of things. Whatever the case our emotional balance is hammered, and we feel like the old saying, "the wind has gone out of our sails."

In those moments do as Peter told early Christians, "*cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.*" (1 Pet. 5:7)

When we feel as though life has no balance, God can and wants to help! God's word provides us with spiritual resources to help us stand in the midst of trials. Notice what Paul tells the Church at Ephesus, "*Take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*" (Eph. 6:13).

Sometimes life knocks us off our feet, and it is only natural for us to become frustrated or even scared. It may be something you have to live with, but it doesn't have to beat you. We can find ample strength in God's word to help us fight our battles, and with his armor to protect us we can stand strong! Jesus said, "*He that endures to the end will be saved.*" (Matt. 10:22) I once noticed a church mural that read:

We can endure anything, if we depend on God for everything.

...Tom Bennett

Spearsville, LA

Antioch Bulletin 4/29/12

Warning Labels

A few years ago, a suit was filed on behalf of a woman who spilled hot coffee on herself during a visit to a drive-through window of a restaurant. The courts awarded her millions, and due to that one incident, companies have had to drastically change the way they advertise.

There is at this time, a commercial on TV, in which a truck is racing down a snowy hillside. In that ad, using small print, the company gives this warning: **DO NOT ATTEMPT. YOU CAN- NOT SNOWBOARD IN A TRUCK.** Is it really necessary to place such a warning? Unfortunately, I would have to say, yes it is, because someone just might try it. If there are those who need guidelines on how not to go snowboarding in a truck, think about how much more we need God's direction.

In God's word we find "*all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him.*" (II Peter 2:3). No question of life would go unanswered if we only con-

sult God's word. You want to know how to make your marriage better? It's in the book! Want to know if you're choosing the right mate, or how to raise children? How to pray, worship, or even how to be saved? It's in there! The Psalmist once stated, "*Direct my steps by your word.*" (Psalm 119:133).

There are how-to-books available on every subject imaginable, written by very smart authors. Sure you might want a book on how to build a picnic table or plant flowers. For the really important questions of life you need only one book: **The Holy Bible.** Don't attempt to live a life that is not patterned after God's word! I am sorry to say that like snowboarding in a truck, there will always be those that try.

...Tom Bennett

Spearsville, LA

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very difficult to imagine.

The New Testament church funded all of its work on free-will offerings. People were encouraged to give as they were prospered (1Corinthians 16:2) and to give as they purposed in their own hearts. This certainly doesn't sound like an auction or a raffle. New Testament Christians weren't giving in order to obtain a collector's item. They gave as they purposed and were prospered in order to relieve suffering and to support the preaching of the gospel.

The Arch L. Ferguson Foundation began when the late Arch Ferguson purposed in his heart to do something with his material blessings that would prosper the church for coming generations. Since its beginning, other Christians have also purposed to make donations to the foundation in memory or in honor of their loved ones. The foundation is one place that our donations continue to work for generations to come since they become a part of the capital investment. We are thankful to donors who have chosen to partner with

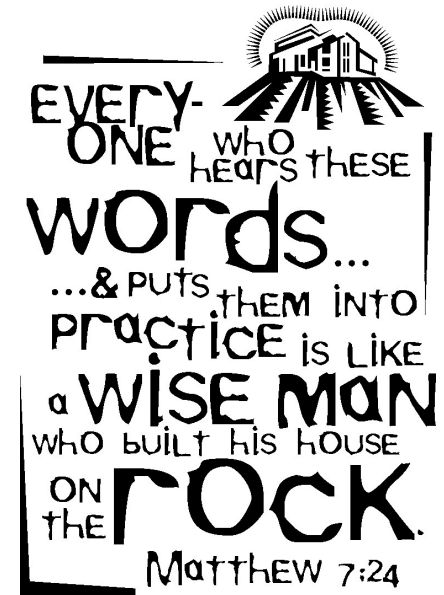
the late Brother Ferguson and the Foundation in supporting the work of the church throughout the world.

...Scott Gage

Fayetteville, Arkansas

Foundation Forum

June 2005



Maimonides On Giving

***“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.”
Matthew 6:1***

Maimonides, a 12th century Jewish scholar, invented the following ladder of giving. Each rung up represents a higher degree of virtue:

1. The lowest: Giving begrudgingly and making the recipient feel disgraced or embarrassed.
2. Giving cheerfully but giving too little.
3. Giving cheerfully and adequately but only after being asked.
4. Giving before being asked.
5. Giving when you do not know who is the individual benefiting, but the recipient knows your identity.
6. Giving when you know

who is the individual benefiting, but the recipient does not know your identity.

7. Giving when neither the donor nor the recipient is aware of the other's identity.

8. The Highest: Giving money, a loan, your time or whatever else it takes to enable an individual to be self-reliant.

It is reported that an anonymous female donor came forward to pledge \$10 million to help families recover from the devastating effects of flooding in Grand Forks, ND and East Forks, MN. She arranged for \$2,000 to be distributed by a nonprofit organization, North Dakota Community Foundation, to each needy household that was victimized by the Red River flood. AIP praises this anonymous donor for her selfless gift to help the flood victims to get back on their feet.

This contrasts with philan-

thropists Edith and Henry Everett who withdrew a \$3 million contribution to fund half of the renovation cost of the Central Park Children's Zoo in New York City. One of the reasons according to The New York Times—they were displeased that their donation would earn only a small plaque with two-inch lettering on the Zoo's entry gate.

We can certainly see a contrast in the motivations of those who donate to various charities. Maimonides' ladder of giving offers some details by which to judge our giving. It is in the spirit of Matthew 6:1-4 and the teaching of Jesus on the subject of giving. May we all learn to give cheerfully, generously and with the right motive.

...Scott Gage

Fayetteville, Arkansas

Foundation Forum

March 2011

Heart Gifts

It's not the things that can be bought
That are life's richest treasure,
It's just the little
"heart gifts"
That money cannot measure...

A cheerful smile, a friendly word,
A sympathetic nod
Are priceless little treasures
From the storehouse
Of our God...

They are the things that can't be bought
With silver or with gold,
For thoughtfulness and kindness
And love are never sold...

They are the priceless things in life
For which no one can pay,
And the giver finds rich recompense
In giving Them Away.

--Author Unknown—

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