

Other Missionaries say to us: I sure hope somebody can have success in Africa

One of Our Unification Church Missionaries in Africa

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Many times I've happened to tell an old missionary that I'm doing volunteer social work to elevate the social and moral standard of African youth. So many times, I've been told by the "old timer," "Well, son, I wish you lots of luck. I've been a missionary out here for 36 years. Africans never change. I sure hope somebody can have success." And I would say enthusiastically, eyes sparkling, and face shining, "Oh, yes sir: I wish you could see what we've accomplished already. I'm very confident that we..." and so on, telling about all our plans, and how our members have been learning music, and how they come from so many different tribes, and on and on like that. "Well, son, I wish you luck. I sure hope somebody can raise the spiritual and moral standard here. The world needs more young men like you. God bless you, son. Me, I'm going back home next week." Something like that. Beat. Why? Because he's had bad experiences for the past 36 years and nothing's changed, and now he's tired and going home. Will I be like that 20 or 30 years from now - or two or three years from now? Or now?

Then I think about what Jesus said when they were nailing him to the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they are doing." And when Judas kissed him. And when Peter denied him outside the Sanhedrin. Jesus didn't just give up and go home. Jesus didn't become cynical and hard-hearted. He just loved the people. For 2000 years, he just loved the people. And I think about Rev. Moon, who has been betrayed, maligned, falsely accused and misunderstood. But he never gives up, and he never gets discouraged. He has never given in to self-pity. He never complains. He just loves the people. And God Himself. The simple fact that He hasn't nudged Planet Earth into the Sun by now is testimony enough to His love.

So, then how can I be discouraged, or bitter or in despair over the spiritual state of Africa? If I am defeated over this point, then I cannot grasp hands with Jesus or Heavenly Father. While my heart is not as developed as theirs, nevertheless, I WILL NOT be discouraged.

It looks like I, at any rate, had a thoroughly naive view and anticipation of what we came here to accomplish, and what would be required of us to accomplish it. I don't expect that we're going to restore this country in two or three years and all live happily ever after. I think we're in this for the long haul, and I think we're in for many frustrations, disappointments, reversals, and betrayals, all the way, just as we have had up to now for the past two years. Maybe some of us will die here. I certainly have no illusion that a knife couldn't be as easily slid between a pair of my ribs as anyone else's. I don't know any more when I go to sleep at night whether I will be alive the next morning. I don't wish it to be that way; it just is that way.

Rev. Moon once told us that there would be some casualties along the path of restoration. So be it. I only pray that if I must die before I'm old, that it won't be for some stupid reason, like negligently running into an ambush of robbers. I hope that in God's eyes I can die for God's purpose, and while I live, to live for the sake of God. But if I have a choice, I would rather live" than die, and that's what I'm counting on. For a long long time. I think God is going to do His best to keep most of us going for many years to come because He doesn't need spirits, He needs bodies He can count on to work for Him.