

THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH ... to whom we would send a letter
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(ACTS 8:26-40)

Dear Sir,

You may not be aware of the fact, but your story has fascinated millions of readers. It suggests romance and mystery of the highest order; it brings to the mind the dark forests of Ethiopia, the glittering splendor of an ancient court where you served, and hints at all kinds of vague possibilities as to why you went on a long journey to worship the God of another race. It is more than likely that you were an Ethiopian, a dark-skinned man of Africa. How, then, did you become acquainted with Israel's God? Had some travelling trader told you of the new, or should I say the old, faith? Had you travelled and studied in other lands? It has been suggested that you were a Hebrew and, as many of your countrymen, had found favor in a royal house of another nation. There are so many things we would like to mention; but since these ordinary questions have so often been asked, forgive us if we confine our interests to the more unusual type of enquiry. Your journey to Jerusalem, your subsequent meeting with Philip the evangelist, and your surrender to Jesus Christ, are very well known. Probably you often delighted your friends with your testimony. We are wondering if the broader implications of this miracle have passed unnoticed.

God's Faithfulness

Perhaps in your moments of reminiscence, you marvelled that a stranger should have met you on a desert highway. Really, sir, the event was a direct answer to prayer. Did you know that long before you were born, King Solomon prayed for you? Let us quote from the ancient record, "... Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched-out arm); when he shall come and pray toward this house; Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for . . ." (I Kings 8:41-43). God is faithful; His covenant promises assure His people that He will answer prayer. No one agency alone is responsible for conversion. Believing prayer is a bridge thrown across the centuries.

God's Righteousness

Dear friend from Africa, you must be proud of the fact that long before your day, another Ethiopian rendered salutary service to a prophet of the true God. Once again let us quote from the ancient writings. "Now when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon . . . he went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king. . . . So Ebed-melech . . . took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by the cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. . . . So they drew up Jeremiah, and took him out of the dungeon" (Jer. 38:7-13). God has a wonderful way of paying debts. There had been an occasion when an Ethiopian rendered service to a prophet, and probably saved his life; now a prophet was to render service to an Ethiopian, and save his soul.

God's Watchfulness

Have you ever watched an ant moving amongst thousands

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God's Greatness

Now all that we have suggested is proof of the power of God; but the salvation which reached your soul when you trusted Christ, the joy that continued even when your evangelist friend suddenly disappeared, the constant fellowship you enjoyed as you journeyed home to evangelize your own people-these are further indications that what God begins, He is able to conclude. His grace enabled you to discover streams in the desert. His kindness in revealing Christ enabled you to find spiritual realities where only dead formalism had existed. This to us seems to be the background of every true conversion; this is the evidence that what is done in human hearts is all of grace. You agree? Of course you do! One day, we will talk about these things face to face.

The Phenomenal Rise of Social Credit

Dr. T. B. McDormand, the genial and capable General Secretary of the Baptist Federation of Canada, represented his country at the Baptist World Alliance conference held at Ruschlikon, August 2-8, 1958. His stirring address, Evangelism and a Saving Faith for Modern Man, seemed to express all that needed to be said concerning this important theme. Dr. McDormand has permitted me to reproduce his closing paragraph. It provides a thrilling illustration of the necessity for, and the possibilities of, one by one evangelism.

" In 1934 the Province of Alberta, Canada, witnessed a strange political phenomenon in the rise to power of the so-called Social Credit Party. Totally unknown candidates contended for seats in the legislature, and they represented an unknown and weird economic theory, championed by Major Douglas, of Britain, and espoused in Alberta by a school teacher who was also a lay preacher of extreme premillennial views. No combination of facts should have more completely foredoomed a party to abject defeat at the polls. Yet they won by a large majority, and have held power in Alberta from that day to this. Let me tell you the probable secret of their astonishing success-Dinner parties in the homes of five thousand Social Credit supporters.

" Back of this technique was a careful training of leaders-laymen and laywomen; a creative providing of techniques in the form of blackboards and charts; the assignment of a specific number of " parties" to each woman in the 'Social Credit Clubs.' Results followed with the certainty with which Nazism, by actually similar methods, captivated Germany with all its boasted culture and high educational standards; or with which Communism has flourished in certain quarters of the earth through its ' cell' organization.

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" It seems incredible that the Christian Church, with the supreme 'program' as it were, for human life, and with the mightiest organizations and resources ever boasted by any cause in all history, should make so little impact on our present-day society-when we take a really square and uncompromising look at what we are doing. The explanation is to be found to quite a degree in the lack of personal equation in our strategy. We count on church buildings, programs, educated preachers, large investments of money to produce the results. They never have; they never will; they never can. 'Ye shall be witnesses unto me'-that is the divinely appointed strategy; and the Church must mobilize, train, and discipline its witnesses if it is to meet the challenge of this hour. Having trained them, strengthened them in their purpose, it must send them out to bear the good tidings: to the guests in their homes, to the man next door, to sons and daughters, to employers and employees. It must equip them with more effective literature and visual aids. It must learn how to counsel with them concerning their failures, and to rejoice with them in their successes-all within a dynamic fellowship of the concerned, in numbers small and large, organized and spontaneous, in the Church family."

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it is problematical whether or not the Christian Church in any one state or county could provide five thousand church members sufficiently enthusiastic to convene dinner parties at which the claims of Christ would be presented to specially invited non-church guests. The Mormon Church sends out missionaries who literally invade non-Mormon communities; the Jehovah Witnesses, in all kinds of weather, stand at street corners endeavoring to place their literature into the hands of the people; Communist agents penetrate deep into the heart of Africa, stirring up trouble among native peoples. All these representatives of an alien faith are keen to spread their teachings, while the rank and file of the Christian community do nothing. Within the circles of the early Church, all members became evangelists; and until we can emulate that inspired example, we cannot even hope to influence the modern world. If every churchman determined to win at least one other soul a year, the world would soon see an upsurge of spiritual power that would dwarf anything known in history.

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I was first taught this important fact when I was about fifteen years of age. My pastor had awakened within my heart an interest in winning others for Christ. I quickly found another boy, and to the best of my ability tried to interest him in the church. Later, when opportunity occurred, I spoke to him about the necessity of becoming a Christian, and finally that lad, Clifford Gay, surrendered himself to the Saviour. That same boy, long since grown to manhood, has for many years been a successful missionary from whose lips multitudes have heard the Gospel story. The one-by-one method may produce a harvest of millions!

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