

September 30, 2006

Hello to our friends, pastors and church planters in Nigeria!

We have now booked our plane flights and applied for our Visas to Nigeria. We are sincerely praying for the Church Planter's Conference and our time in your wonderful country.

Developing a World Vision

Why are a group of American pastors coming to Nigeria? First, I assure you it is not because we have all the answers. We have as much to learn from you as you do from us. Second, it is not because we love to travel. We'll miss our families very much. So why are we coming? The answer boils down to a simple command from Jesus Christ:

Matthew 28:19 (Living Bible) *Therefore go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

The phrase, "all the nations" is the Greek phrase "*pante ta ethne*," which means "all the ethnic people-groups of the world." Jesus commands us to take the gospel to all the cities, villages, and tribes of the world with all of their unique languages and collections of people. Not just to the places that are convenient to go ... but to the hard places ... and to the hard people. We are to build disciples from all people in all places. We must reach Muslims, Hindus, atheists, those that don't want to have anything to do with the church, those that are church-ed but not saved, and those who are de-churched.

In another gospel, the Great Commission is recorded with these words:

Mark 16:15 *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."*

Every man, woman and child throughout the world deserves the opportunity to hear the gospel. We are to proclaim the gospel everywhere.

God has led us to partner with Living Spring Ministries to reach every man, woman and child throughout Nigeria. Are you committed to that? Has that mission captivated your heart? Are you willing to do whatever it takes for every person in your country to hear the gospel? And are you the type of person who wants to take the gospel beyond the borders of Nigeria into other countries in West Africa ... and ultimately to all of the world? If you are, then you are the type of person we want to work with at the Church Planter's conference.

At the Church Planter's conference, we'll be talking about planting churches to reach people with the gospel. Any worthy goal demands a strategy to make it happen. And the strategy Living Spring Ministries has come up with is to plant one hundred churches throughout Nigeria that will each reproduce themselves and plant ten additional churches. That totals one thousand churches. "The Vision of One Thousand" is more than a slogan ... it needs to be a rallying cry for Christians in Nigeria.

Do you believe that it is possible to plant one thousand churches? I do. It will take God raising up new leaders that are aggressively focused on planting churches. It will take courage, money and human resources beyond anything Nigeria has ever seen. But it can happen. The churches and ministries in Nigeria must work together. We must share the vision with others and trust that God will bring them alongside Living Spring Ministries to collectively reach Nigeria for Christ.

So let me ask you a few "hard" questions:

1. Who are you discipling right now who could become a church planter in the next one or two years?
2. Who are you praying for that God could call into His ministry?
3. How much are you talking about people "going" to plant other churches rather than talking about people "staying" and being a part of your church?
4. Are you seeking to build the Kingdom of God (Kingdom with a capital "K") rather than your own little kingdom (with a small "k")?

Please begin praying right now for what you will hear at the Church Planter's conference ... pray for your heart to be right. Pray to be open to how the Holy Spirit leads you. Be willing to make courageous decisions and to step out in faith as God leads you.

Getting to Know One of our Speakers: Nolen Rollins

I was in a conversation with several of our church planters earlier this week. We were talking about how the church today needs evangelists, pastors and teachers. But perhaps what the church in America needs most is "LEADERS." And one of the finest leaders I know is Nolen Rollins. He has been the executive pastor of some of the largest churches in America, including First Baptist Church in Atlanta, serving with Dr. Charles Stanley. He is currently the Missions pastor at our church, Summit Church, in Estero, FL. He also directs a Christian Foundation to help raise resources for Christian ministries around the world.

But perhaps what I appreciate most about Nolen is his ability to develop leaders around him. He mentored Andy Stanley and the group of pastors who started North Point Community Church in Atlanta, Georgia – they are now seeing over 20,000 people attend their three branch churches throughout Atlanta. One of the reasons our church, Summit Church, has grown from zero to over 900 in three years is because Nolen has mentored and trained the other pastors on our staff. He has vision, wisdom ... and a lot of patience as he works with these men.

Nolen will be coming to speak at the Nigerian Church Planter's conference on the subject of leadership. He will speak at two plenary sessions on (1) Creating a Kingdom Culture, and (2) Spiritual Leadership. He will lead a series of workshops that will also address the subject of leadership. His topics there will be: (1) Developing a Personal Philosophy of Leadership, (2) Ten Most Common Mistakes Leaders Make – And How to Avoid Them, (3) How to Develop Leaders, and (4) Mentoring the Next Generation. We also have Nolen addressing local businessmen from Jos on the

subject of leadership at two day-long seminars.

It is a great privilege to have men like Nolen Rollins, Arjuna Chiguluri and Stephen Bowe speak at this conference. You will be blessed as you hear them. But I don't want you to miss the opportunity to get many, many, many other pastors, church planters and potential church planters to this conference. As I mentioned in an earlier letter, it is not our goal to get "a lot" of people to this conference. But it is my goal and prayer to get a lot of the "right" people to this conference. The "right" people are those who are leaders right now – and those who have potential to develop as leaders in the next few years. They are the people we need at the conference. I hope that is your goal and prayer as well. What are you doing to encourage the right people to be at the conference?

Bible Study: Values – Great Commission, Great Commandment, Reproductive Missional Strategy

Finally, let me introduce the Bible study for this week. It picks up on my thoughts about the Great Commission. It also talks about Jesus' Great Commandment: to love God with all our hearts and to love our neighbors as ourselves. It's a great commitment to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment that produces a great church. We'll also look at the values of being missional and reproductive in our churches.

If you have missed one of the first five Leadership Letters, let me know. Here is the list of topics that we've covered.

Leadership Letter #1

Why have a church planting conference in Nigeria?

Bible Study: How Jesus prepared His men for CP – Acts 1:1-11

Leadership Letter #2

What does it mean to fulfill the Great Commission? Discipleship

How can we make the CP conference most successful?

Bible Study: The measure of a church – faith, hope, love

Leadership Letter #3

Growing healthy churches – F-L-O-W-S

Bible Study: Sharpening the focus of the church – Acts 2:41-47

Leadership Letter #4

The primacy of the Word of God – 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Getting to Know One of our Speakers: Arjuna Chiguluri

Bible Study: Pictures of Power – Acts 3-4

Leadership Letter #5

Our Primary Motivation – Philippians 1:19-21

What is Grace Global Network?

Getting to Know One of our Speakers: Stephen Bowe

Bible Study: Follow the Leader – Hebrews 13:17

Till next week,

Henry Oursler