

Prayer Dispatch 03.23.18 / What do baseball, fishing and witnessing all have in common?

Our ministry remains the Word of God – lifting up Jesus, equipping pastors, building up the church, establishing the next generation of families in the Word of God – this is our ministry



Pictures are as follows...

1_One on One with Businessmen – Here we are in the offices of the director of the Bank of Nigeria ministering the Word of God. Emeka is faithful about setting up evangelism contacts while we are in Nigeria.



2_Small Church Home Groups – Not only do we minister to large groups, but the team leads practical “how to” workshops as part of the conference.



3_Baptist Church Conference – Emeka has a broad ministry in Nigeria and arranges for church ministries in Baptist churches, as well as other denominations.



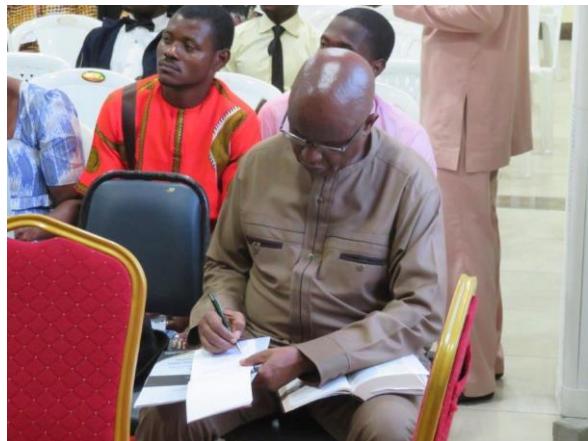
3b Baptist Leadership Conference – The Marriage and Family Conference was the first to be offered to Baptist pastors.



4_500 Ministers from Presbytery - Two years ago, 30 attended this conference. Last year over 500 attended. We are raising support to rent a conference center to host an even larger number this year.



5_Pastors in the Word Supplied by You – This is the goal – building up pastors in the Word of God and supplying them with quality study Bibles--that they, in turn, can build up the Church.



6_Emeka - Man of Vision – Rev. Emeka is our host. If you are looking to support a minister in Nigeria, I can strongly recommend this man of God.



7_Rich Smith Once Again Ministering with Me – Rich serves on the board of directors and has traveled throughout Africa ministering with me. If you would like a skilled layman to speak at your next men's conference, I strongly recommend Richard.



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In this Prayer Dispatch...

- I. **What do baseball, fishing and witnessing all have in common?**
- II. First, let's look at baseball.
- III. The same is true for fishing.
- IV. What does all this have to do with witnessing?
- V. **Prayer Requests: As you pray, please allow the accompanying passages from the Word of God to guide your prayers.**

2 Corinthians 1:11 "you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many."

A. Spiritual preparation of hearts in Nigeria

John 16:8-11

- 8 "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;
- 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;
- 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

B. Safety in travels

Psalms 121:8

- 8 The LORD will guard your going out
- and your coming in
- From this time forth and forever.

Philippians 4:7

- 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts
- and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 John 4:3-4

- 4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them;
- because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

C. God would empower the preaching and teaching of His holy, eternal, inerrant written Word

Isaiah 55:11

- 11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth;
- It will not return to Me empty,
- Without accomplishing what I desire,
- And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

D. That God would bless the ministry materially, that we might, in turn, bless those to whom we minister. We ask only for the privilege of blessing pastors and Bible teachers in Nigeria and Cameroon.

Follow this link to make a donation <http://gciweb.org/>

Luke 6:38

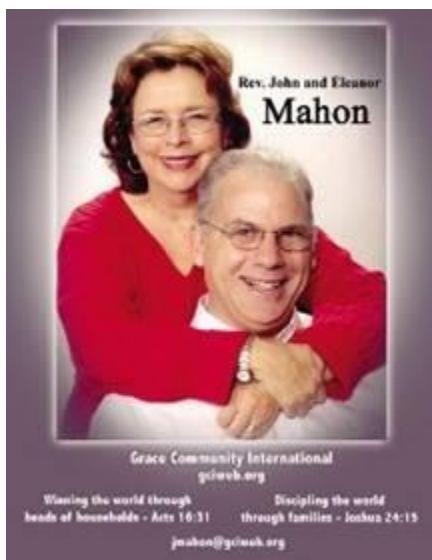
- 38 "Give , and it will be given to you.
- They will pour into your lap a good measure – pressed down, shaken together, and running over.
- For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

Psalms 67:1-2

- God be gracious to us and bless us,
- And cause His face to shine upon us – Selah.
- 2 That Your way may be known on the earth,
- Your salvation among all nations.

Psalms 67:6-7

- 6 The earth has yielded its produce;
- God, our God, blesses us.
- 7 God blesses us,
- That all the ends of the earth may fear Him.



Dear Prayer Warriors,

What do baseball, fishing and witnessing all have in common? That has been something on my heart of late. With Easter coming up, it is one of the great seasons of witnessing opportunities for the Christian. Just like Christmas, at Easter, Christianity-- of one form or another-- is on everyone's mind. Unfortunately, for many, the thought of using Easter for witnessing (apart from those professionals who we pay to do it for us on Sunday morning) has long been set aside. Why – the numbers are simply against us. We have shared so many times and so many times we have either been rebuffed, rebuked or argued with, that many have decided-- "The numbers don't lie, it is just not for me" --and gone on to other more fruitful things. That brings us to baseball, fishing and witnessing.

First, let's look at baseball. I remember when my son was playing baseball as a school boy. It suddenly dawned on me--This has got to be the most unfair game in all the world! You see, in baseball there is one offensive player – the batter. There are nine defensive players. Then the officiator gives the ball to the defense – it is one against the world. In addition, the pitcher hides the ball in his mitt and you do not know how fast and what type of ball to hit until he throws it. Add to that the fact that a batter, who is facing a professional pitcher who can throw a 90+ mile an hour fastball, will have to start his swing before he can even see it. Behind the batter is the catcher, who is badgering and insulting him. In the stands the opposing team's fans are yelling and insulting him. Out in the field the opposing team is yelling and insulting him – a host of distractions, and there he stands-- all alone. Also, in terms of the fundamentals, there is little, if any, variation. Catch, throw, swing, that is pretty much it. For the batter it is even more basic – stand still, swing. Those who are successful in baseball are abject failures as far as the numbers are concerned. A "batting average" – the number of hits a player makes vs. the number of outs, is based on a percentage basis. A professional player who fails to hit 75% of the time has a batting average of 25.00 and, by the way, is a multimillionaire. There are even players who fail 80% of the time and are millionaires. Can you imagine any other sport – let's say football or basketball. The referee allows one offensive player on the field, then the defense fields the entire team, then the ball is given to the defensive team, who is allowed to hide it. When the offensive player does get the ball, he is only successful 20% of the time. What kind of sport is that? Yet people love baseball – not the percentages but the game. In fact, almost every school, neighborhood or community has baseball fields which are constantly in use and played on by children as young as 5 and as old as 60. One of the reasons is that it is inexpensive, requires just a few "tools" and is easy to learn. Also, it is easy to get hooked – for the child, once he has heard the "crack" of the bat and seen that ball fly out into center field as he races, amid the screams and cheers of parents, for first base – he is hooked for life. As evidence, this spring every week you will find baseball enthusiasts of all ages out playing this game in some form or another – some even on Easter Sunday.

The same is true for fishing. What hunting endeavor is there where you are expected to track down a prey that you will never see until it is in your hands? Not only that, one of the best fishermen I know says that for every 100 "casts" he makes, he may only get three "strikes" and then, perhaps only one "keeper." That is a 97% failure rate. Can you imagine this in any other hunting sport? Can you imagine a sportsman sharing at church that he got off 30 rounds with his rifle before he hit anything and, on top of that, he was just shooting into the trees. He never actually saw what he hit until it screamed. The truth is, if you developed a fishing method where you got your failure rate down to 50% you could become a millionaire – between selling your lures, your videos and your tv show on the Outdoor Sportsman Channel. Again, the fundamentals are pretty much the same--stand, cast, reel in, stand, cast, reel in. Yet people love fishing – not the percentages but the sport. Of all the "hunting" sports, fishing is by far the most popular. Children as young as five enjoy it as well as those well into their 60s and 70s. It is inexpensive, requires just a few "tools" and is easy to learn. It is also easy to get hooked, for the child--once he sees that bobber go down and the rod bend towards the water. He hears the cheers of his dad and fellow fishermen and he reels it in, not knowing what is on the other end as the line goes crazy zigging and zagging in the water. His dad nets the fish and the child finally gets to hold it up for the picture, as he is slapped on the back and cheered – well he is hooked for

life. As evidence of this, this spring, every week you will find fishing enthusiasts of all ages out trying their skill at this sport – some even on Easter Sunday.

What does all this have to do with witnessing?

1. It is one against the world – Jesus made this abundantly clear. The odds are not stacked in our favor. As He so clearly instructs us in John 15:18-19 " If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you." It is as if the pitcher not only wants to strike you out, but hit you with every ball. It is as if you are fishing in streams frequented by lions. Satan, the world and the flesh all hate the witness and will do all they can to discourage, hurt and even kill the one who enters the games.
2. The percentages are always against us. Again, as Jesus forewarned in Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." It will always be the case that far more people will refuse to listen and, when they do, turn us down. The exception will always be those who pray to receive Christ.
3. We never know what to expect. Just like the batter does not know if he will hit the ball or not. Just like the fisherman does not know if he will get a strike or not. So, the witness does not know if he is sowing in season or out. However, this lack of certainty does not exempt him from being a faithful witness. Just as God the Holy Spirit teaches in 2 Timothy 4:2 "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction." And again, in Ecclesiastes 11:6 "Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good."
4. It is love that keeps us in the game, not success – God the Holy Spirit expresses this best in the life of the Apostle Paul 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 "14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."
5. Witnessing is a matter of repetition– Ask, share, pray, repeat, ask, share, pray, repeat... Of all the Christian ministries, it takes the fewest tools and lowest skill level. A child in Sunday school may lead his neighbor to Christ as can an infirm elderly person in the nursing home. It takes a rudimentary knowledge of the Bible and that is all. Unlike the training of a pastor, missionary or Bible teacher which may take years – a witness may be trained by another in less than a month and that, in just a few hours meeting once a week. Most examples of witnessing in the Bible took place within days if not hours of the conversion of the witness. It is a simple

straightforward message 1 John 5:11-12 “11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.”

6. Once you have experienced success you are hooked for life. If you think the cheers of the stadium are exhilarating, if you think the cheers of your fellow fishermen are exhilarating, nothing can compare to those of the saints, of the Savior and the angels in heaven Luke 15:10 “In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Unfortunately, unlike baseball and fishing, this spring you will rarely find Christians out witnessing in their community and few will bring a non-Christian friend with them to church or have them over for dinner Easter Sunday to hear the gospel. Let this be said of others and not of us. Let we be the ones praying with Jesus for others to join us in this great endeavor and not be the object of their prayers. Matthew 9:36-38 “36 Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.’”

I close this email as always with a deep and abiding thankfulness for your sacrificial and effectual prayers which empower and drive this ministry ever forward in the cause of Christ.

By His mercy,
II Corinthians 4:1
Rev. John S. Mahon
Grace Community Int. -

Please allow me to close this dispatch with a hymn from my prayer notebook that has been especially meaningful to me...

(Psalms 104:33-34 “I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. Let my meditation be pleasing to Him; As for me, I shall be glad in the LORD.”)

Link to music/tune for this hymn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k85x4TsIxXE>

Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee:
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

*Holy, Holy, Holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who wert and art, and evermore shalt be.*

Holy, Holy, Holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy – there is none beside Thee
Perfect in power, in love and purity.

*Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise They name in earth and sky and sea;
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!*

(Reginald Heber - Born: April 21, 1783, Malachipas, Cheshire, England. Died: April 3, 1826, Trichinopoly (Tiruchirappalli), Tamil Nadu, India, of a cerebral hemorrhage while bathing. Buried: St. John's Church, Trichinopoly, Tamil Nadu, India (north side of the altar). Heber attended Brasenose College, Oxford, where he won a number of awards in English and Latin. He received a fellowship to All Souls College, and later became Rector at Hodnet, Shropshire, England. In 1823, he became, somewhat reluctantly, Bishop of Calcutta, India. Most of his hymns were published after his death. He lived, ministered, worshiped and blessed those around him with his gifts in an era when service, rather than fame drove the writers of hymns to compose and bless the church with their efforts.