

## Bimonthly Encouragement to Sudanese Christian Workers

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No. 5 March 2010. Please note my new email address (again, sorry!).

### **Christian Salt and Light at Election time in Sudan.**

In Matthew 5:13-16 our Lord Jesus says his disciples are both “salt” and “light” in the world in which they live. Jesus uses common, everyday, household items to teach a very important lesson. It is as valid today as when he spoke.

A person **living in a radically Christian way** will be different from most of the people he or she lives amongst. Living this salt and light way, Christians can influence their country towards the values and standards of God’s kingdom. But, be warned, **it is a costly way** of life.

**Salt** loses itself – its own identity – in seasoning a meal, in preserving fish, in purifying a festering wound. God wants Christians to permeate society with his sweetness and purity. Salt gets so involved in its mission that it cannot return to just being salt. It gives itself away by following its calling to mix. Jesus calls to us, “Follow me”. Live this sacrificial way

**Light** does not mix with darkness. One or the other will always prevail. God wants Christians to show they are his people by living “holy” lives. Holy lives radiate Christian light. God wants holy Christians to be noticed by everyone they meet – at home, at university, at work, at play, at church. He wants His people seen to be like Jesus in relation to their world. Light challenges darkness by its very presence. Light exposes. Light attracts. Light shows the way. Christian living points to Jesus. He is THE only Way to God, John 14:6.

**Like Jesus** who lived among sinners but influenced them for good, we must do the same. Jesus never let others influence him for bad! Jesus did not isolate himself from sinners. He went around doing good among them for the majority of his ministry, Acts 10:38.

*Can we apply all of this to ourselves at election time? I believe “Yes we can”!*

One elderly English Christian has written that there are six weapons Christians have to use in bringing about social change.<sup>1</sup> I will expand them:

- **Prayer** – 1 Timothy 2:1-2, bowing before God to seek his will, individually and corporately.
- **Evangelism** (& discipleship) – 1 Peter 2:11-12, producing Holy Spirit changed fruitfulness, in socially responsible Christian citizens.

<sup>1</sup> John Stott The Living Church (Inter-Varsity Press: Nottingham) p. 144-148, 2007

- **Example** – 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Timothy 4:12, influencing others as each Christian takes a responsible stand for Jesus.
- **Argument** – 1 Peter 3:15-16, listening to those around and answering them in a gentle, God-honouring way.
- **Socio-political action** – John 13:12-17, serving others by being responsible citizens, exercising our democratic voice, both by voting and speaking out about current issues in a Christ-honouring way.
- **Suffering** – Matthew 5:10-12; 2 Timothy 3:12-13, paying the price with no complaints! Our Lord suffered to bring us salvation. We are called to follow in his steps. The way of the cross does not promise to be easy!

*How is God using the promised election (2010) and referendum(2011)?*

This is a key question that every Sudanese Christian must ask. In the next few months there will also be a general election in the United Kingdom, where I live. So I ask a similar question of myself. Keep in mind Romans 13:1-7. Human authorities are all ultimately under God's sovereign control. I am responsible to obey the British government, unless they require me to do something specifically against God's commandments. The same is true for you and the Sudanese government.

When campaigning, or advising others in church and Christian Union, or voting, or receiving the results, Christians are asked by God to live Christianly. **We must all be God-honouring through everything.** God is working out His purposes. He is the ultimate and Sovereign power, Isaiah 46:8-10; 55:6-9.

*Where does real power lie? How can we be a part of it?*

In Colossians Paul writes to Christian slaves about how they can live Christianly in their life circumstances. "Rather than exercise *revolutionary* power, Christians proclaimed a *transforming* power. By their life and message they set a process in motion that eventually led to the abolition of slavery".<sup>2</sup> Colossians 3:1-4, 22-25.

We must learn to reverence God by our lives – what we do and what we say. We must see ourselves as slaves of God first. **We must serve others to please Him.** Then our all-powerful God will take our Christ-honouring lives and use them to bring about the changes He wants in Sudan. He will do it in His time – and His time is always the right time.

So, during the next few months especially, it is over to you.

**You are the salt of the Sudan and the light of the Sudan.**

Make sure you live the Christ-honouring way – and watch what your God will do!

*Pastor Colin Salter. (Please share these thoughts with others and refer them to my website for more study resources!).*

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<sup>2</sup> Arthur Patzia New International Bible Commentary Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon (Carlisle: Paternoster) page 92, 1995.