

RESOURCES FOR REFORMATION AND REVIVAL



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ERLO STEGEN AND THE REVIVAL AMONG THE ZULUS

TESTIMONY

THE Founder of KwaSizabantu Mission, Rev. Erlo Stegen is the second youngest of 5 brothers. He only went to church because his parents compelled him to go. His attitude was: "When I'm grown up, I'll throw all this religious stuff overboard." Then God began to convict him of his disobedience towards his parents and he cried to God, "Lord Jesus, I need you! Change my life and save me from my sins." Initially, Erlo Stegen resisted God's call to enter the ministry. "I was unwilling to go, the price was too high. So, for 18 months, I went through hell as I rebelled against God."

Before his conversion Erlo Stegen had hated reading

books. Reading was a burden. "After Jesus came into my life, I loved reading the Bible and it became my most precious book." Before his conversion, he never sang, believing he was incapable of singing. "Yet now I can hardly stop singing."

With his conversion he lost all interest in parties, dances, and his obsession to make money. The things of the world receded and the promises of the Scriptures came alive.

During his 12 years as a missionary before the revival broke, Erlo Stegen experienced the debilitating and devastating impact of ancestral worship and witchcraft. One day, after pointing out in a sermon that Jesus is alive forevermore and that the founders of all other religions are dead and buried, an old woman came up to him and pleaded with him to pray for her insane daughter. Erlo Stegen described the shocking scene of a girl

sitting on the floor, her arms bound to the centre pole with wire. The wire had cut deeply into her flesh, and she was covered with scars and bleeding wounds. She spoke incessantly in foreign languages. Her mother explained that for weeks she had not eaten anything, nor slept. "She breaks the strongest ropes, and runs around destroying everything. When she bites someone, she won't let go. Look at my cattle pen. I don't have any cows, sheep or goats left. Every animal I owned, I sacrificed to the spirits.

The cows I didn't kill, I had to sell to pay the witchdoctor. I haven't got any money. I am at the end of my strength," the woman lamented.

Erlo Stegen took the troubled girl to his parents' farm for 3 weeks where they prayed



Rev. Erlo Stegen, his 6 daughters, their husbands and their children

day and night. But the demon-possessed girl wasn't healed. She sang her satanic hymns incessantly. She blasphemed the Blood of Jesus. She renounced the Blood and death of the Lord Jesus as only the devil could do. "What was I to do? Everyone had heard me preach: 'Don't go to the witchdoctors, don't sacrifice oxen and goats to the spirits - Jesus is the answer to every problem - come to Him.' I was at the end of my strength and close to a nervous breakdown. In the end we all gave up and took the girl back."

Erlo Stegen felt he failed completely. "I had preached the Gospel for 12 years and there weren't even 12 true Christians to show for it." Many hundreds had come forward and made public commitments to Christ but most of these converts still craved cigarettes and engaged in worldliness. In desperation he challenged his congregation to attend



Bible studies each day: 7am and 5pm. They began by studying the Book of Acts. From the outset the Lord took hold of their hearts. The more they studied, the more their hearts thawed. They saw how the early Christians continued in one accord in prayer. And they believed they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit for them to be witnesses for Him. (Acts 1:8).

Revival is something the world doesn't understand. During one of these services, a young woman who was a new convert, suddenly interrupted. Her simple prayer was: "Oh Lord Jesus, we have heard what the early Church was like. Couldn't you come down and be in our midst as you came down two thousand years ago? Couldn't our Church be like the one in Jerusalem?" A week and a half later revival broke out! "It was while we were praying in a cowshed when they heard a noise like a great wind. Everybody was conscious of the presence of God. All I could do was to bow down and worship the God of Heaven," says Erlo.

Then a witch, who was in charge of a training school for witches, came to Erlo Stegen. She said: "I need Jesus. Can He save me? I am bound with the chains of hell. Can He break these chains? If Jesus doesn't save me right now, I will die today and go to hell! Pray for me, that Jesus rids me of these evil spirits."

Rev. Stegen and some of his co-workers began to sing hymns of victory, of the risen Christ, who has overcome the devil, conquered sin and death, paid the price with His own Blood! As they sang, the woman flung herself on the ground and began to move around like a wild animal. The sounds of barking dogs and grunting pigs came from her. "We prayed: 'O Lord set this person free!'" *"Not by might, nor by power but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts."* (Zechariah 4:6. "The moment the evil spirits left her, the expression on her face changed abruptly. She cried out: 'Oh how marvellous, Jesus has set me free! Jesus has broken these chains of hell!'"

Rev. Stegen recounts that for months they hardly slept. Day and night they counselled and prayed for hundreds upon hundreds of sick, troubled and demon-possessed people. "Hardened sinners wept like children. It was as if the Day of Judgment had dawned. The conviction went so deep that some of them couldn't believe that Jesus could forgive them. They came with tears, and they left with joy. Their lives were changed and all things became new. Children were converted and parents were astounded at their change of attitude and behaviour. Marriages were transformed. God kindled His fire and it spread through the valleys and the mountains so that thousands were saved in one week. That happened among the Zulus. There is no limit to what God could do."

"From then on the Zulus knew that Christianity is not only the White mans' religion. They have experienced that Jesus Christ is their God too. I remember a blind man whose eyes had suddenly been opened walking up and down shaking his head and

walking up and down shaking his head and crying out again and again: 'Jesus is my God! He is truly my God!' Sick people would be brought in on stretchers and rise and walk around. As a rule we never prayed for healing before the person involved had settled his/her spiritual life." People would come saying, "We cannot carry on living in sin. We need forgiveness. We cannot go home without having peace with God."

A Hindu woman came with her mentally handicapped 16 year-old daughter, diagnosed as 'incurable' by the many doctors she had consulted. She had also been to the Hindu temples, but their gods couldn't help her either. Then she met a Zulu man who told her of the Christians at Mapamulo who serve the Lord Jesus. "That is the God I want to serve!" she responded and instantly her daughter was able to speak: "From now on, I want to serve your God, our gods failed, but your God has healed me!" said the daughter.

At Tugela Ferry, Anagreta, an 18-year-old girl, who had been completely paralysed for 18 months, began to shake like the leaves on a tree. She leapt out of her bed onto her feet and started running!

In an instant the Lord Jesus completely healed her. The news of this event spread like wildfire throughout the entire area. It was as if the very air was charged with the presence of God.

This year is the 40th anniversary of the outbreak of that remarkable Revival among the Zulus and the ministry of KwaSizabantu continues to be a channel of Christ's Living Waters bringing many to the Lord. ■

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." John 7:37-38

For more information visit:
www.kwasizabantu.com

Obtain the book:
Revival Among the Zulus by Erlo Stegen